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ZX SPECTRUM

No.12 1984/85

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CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL



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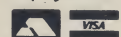
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SEASONAL GOOD WILL

Welcome to the **CRASH CHRISTMAS SPECIAL!** It's quite a special issue for us as well, because this is the twelfth issue and so marks a year of publishing. This somewhat expanded issue of CRASH is slightly unusual in that there are a few less reviews than normal, but that is made up for with the other odds and ends, especially the twelve competitions which I believe total up to over £7,000 worth in prizes. There is also the 1985 Calendar, a 16 page full colour pull out with six months on either side, complete with two giant pictures by **Oliver Frey**. On top of that we have **Lloyd Mangram's Look Back**, a personal view of this year's software from the man who thinks he knows it all (I have to get my own back sometimes), **Derek Brewster** has produced a longer than usual article on the state of adventure software as part of the Adventure Trail and **Angus Ryall** has gone and got tipsy somewhere and picked another fight with an advertiser. As you can see, it's business as usual! As part of the extended Playing Tips, this month, **Robin Candy**, Ludlow's answer to P. Hacker, has been pressganged into doing a Pokes Corner, a bundle of cheats for the lazy arcade player. And if producing a calendar wasn't enough, there's a double helping of the Termini! Man from **Oliver Frey**. Luny Jetman has a couple of pages to himself too. And then there's the special article which explains how CRASH gets put together every month, which might give you an insight into why most magazine people are a little nutty at times; and there's a piece about what it was like for the BBC TV crew to film Imagine as the Liverpool software house headed towards its nervous breakdown. So I think there's plenty to keep you occupied gainfully over the long dark days of the Christmas holiday and we hope you enjoy the contents.

FREEDOM TO SPEAK

It wouldn't be quite right, season of goodwill notwithstanding, to have an editorial without some serious content, and on this, our twelfth issue I felt like saying something relating to the magazine's first year of existence. Being a totally independent outfit has meant having a lot more freedom to speak minds than is often possible in a publication owned and operated by a large corporation. In CRASH we have tried to offer writers the freedom to say what they want, and although this can sometimes lead to the risk of libel (for all sorts of odd things), responsible writers can make good use of it. There is a computer magazine (no names but it has a big letter) that claimed to be outspoken, irreverent and newsy - in fact just what young computer owners wanted. But being irreverent isn't what people really want, I suspect. You can be subversive in attitude, certainly light-hearted, but all these attitudes must be underlain with a core of seriousness, otherwise the comments made aren't worth the paper they are printed on. In other words, it's one thing to have fun and quite another to be redundant.

Any magazine that relies on advertising revenue for much of its monthly income is obviously put in an invidious position when it comes to taking money from an advertiser who later discovers that his product has been heavily and negatively criticised. I have often had the impression that more pressure gets put on CRASH than on others along the lines of, 'no good review, no ad booking,' and whilst one can't exactly blame an advertiser for the attitude, it seems odd that the same advertiser will still take space in other magazines when they either ignore his product or treat it just as we may have done, i.e. say that the game is rubbish. Perhaps

it underlines the fact that CRASH would seem to have become, as several people in the business have said, the trade buying guide for Spectrum software. Trade papers, on the whole, steer clear of making personal comment on product, their job being to help sell it. I'm not saying that we have felt too much of this (unfair?) pressure over the year, but it has been there.

On the other hand we have probably laid ourselves open to this pressure because software houses often ring to see if a game has been reviewed and how it did. If we know, we tend to tell them. My experience from the other side of the fence has been that if you try that with most other computer publications they will tell you that they cannot tell you anything because they are not allowed to. Their advertisement manager, however, is very likely (if he knows) to ring you up and offer you a select choice of bits of the review - naturally the bits that make the review sound like a happy one. The truth is, that the British software scene is really quite small, quite close knit, magazine personnel get to know their advertisers quite well, it can hurt to have to say to someone you know and like that their game is a load of rubbish. But without the

freedom to say so, if it's true, a magazine like CRASH loses all credibility. The real answer is that software houses should just produce the very best. But that's utopian!

One thing I have noticed during this year, and am thankful for, is that if we slip up over a review in any way, you are all very quick to say so. At the end of the day, whether the accolade of being also a trade guide is true or not, CRASH is here for the buyers of software as well as for the producers of software.

On a slightly different aspect of the same subject, we are carrying an article this issue about Imagine and its demise, as seen (largely) through the eyes of the BBC film crew who worked with Imagine right up to the end. This is a touchy subject because much of what is known or has been said by people involved, is personal. Normally a publication is expected to take a very impartial view of anything on which it reports, and I hope what is written (by me in fact) is at least balanced. To be impartial in this case is not easy, because Imagine owed CRASH a lot of money at a time when we desperately needed it. There has been a suggestion by a person connected with the Imagine business that if we say anything he does not like that

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ACG AMULET WINNERS



Oliver Frey presents the Ultimate ACG Amulet trophy to the winners of the Sabre Wulf Map Competition.

we will be running the risk of a libel suit. It seems ironical that CRASH should lose a lot of money in what can only be seen as morally dubious circumstances and then risk losing more to the very people to whom we first lost it and who benefited in some small way by it. I mention all this because I don't want anyone to think that the article is written in any vengeful sense, because it isn't. And to those who have said to me that it all happened six months ago, why bring it up again, I can only reply that the story has not been fully told (Bruce Everiss has had a long piece published in *Your Computer*, but it's by no means the whole of it) and a function of CRASH is to inform on more than just the games. I don't claim that this is the entire story either – for that we will probably have to wait a long while, by which time we really may not care – but it certainly includes material that hasn't been mentioned before.

PSYTRAXX MAP

As a rather good illustration of what I was saying earlier in the piece above, we will be carrying a pretty extensive map of *Psytraxx* the game from *The Edge* in next month's issue. I say it's an illustration because *The Edge* did come in for a bit of sniping from our News Input pages a couple of months back and the review of the game itself, while not bad, was not over enthusiastic. Nevertheless, there are a lot of people out there playing it and getting hopelessly lost in the thousands of rooms while doing so. Showing there are no hard feelings over a few remarks, *The Edge* have given CRASH the exclusive right to print the map of *Psytraxx* which I hope will give a helping hand to the many stranded deep in the PCBs and chips!

Incidentally, we are looking forward to seeing the next release from *The Edge*, called

After admiring the large Ultimate trophy of the ACG Amulet for several weeks, which was sitting in the art department waiting for its winners, CRASH's David Western polished it up one last time ready to present it to Steven Westland and his two

young assistants, Ian Statham and David Westland. The three boys are from West Wickham in Kent, and travelled up with Steven's father (who is a policeman) to visit the CRASH offices in Ludlow on Friday 9th November.

Brian Bloodaxe. It's been described as an 'incredibly complex game' which features the hero battling his way through an unfriendly platform environment. There are 104 screens and a lot of clues and objects to be found along the way. Ultimately, the aim is to find the valuable hidden treasure, but everything possible happens to make this an extremely difficult task. We'll be reviewing *Brian Bloodaxe* next month, when it's business back to usual and Christmas out of the way!

Have a happy holiday, and enter every competition, the prizes are well worth it!

ROGER KEAN



Steven (aged 14) was responsible for the design and drawing of the *Sabre Wulf* map, while Ian (aged 13) did the character blow ups which adorned its key and wrote out the details, and David (aged 11) helped with the map design and did the colouring.

Theirs was also the biggest of the entries with the actual map measuring something in excess of 6 feet by 4 feet. Apart from being very large and very accurate, it was surprisingly delicate in colouring, as our colour picture in the November issue shows.

On arriving at Ludlow, the boys and Mr. Westland were taken to lunch by David Western and Franco Frey, after which the Ultimate ACG Trophy was presented by Oliver Frey who, for the occasion, took a few minutes off from producing calendar artwork! It was rather fitting that that very day the first copies of Ultimate's new game *Knight Lore* arrived. Now we await the flood of entries for *Underwulde* and *Knight Lore* in what promises to be Ultimate's most exciting competition yet, with loads of new Spectrums to be won as well as software and clothing impedimenta!

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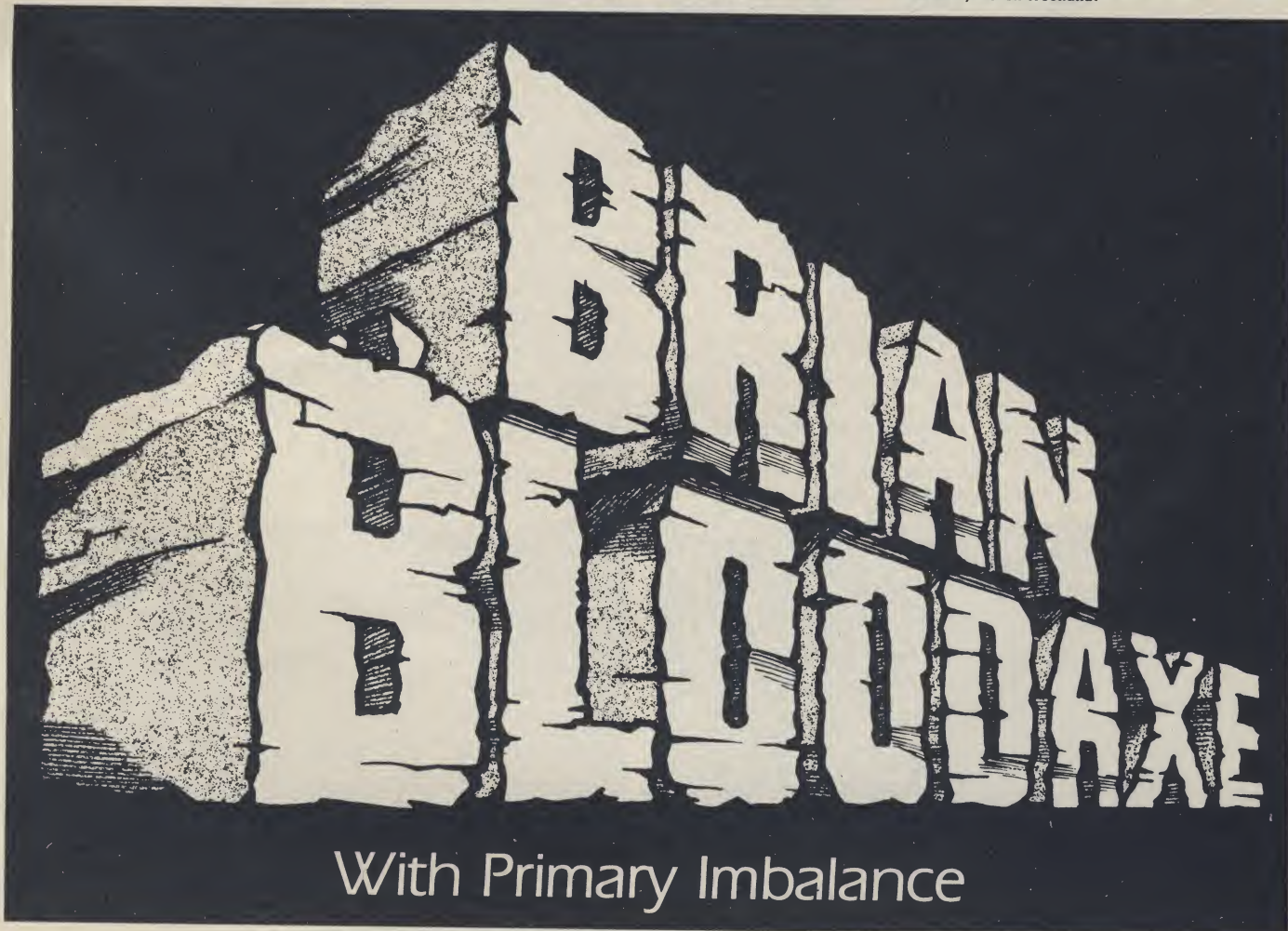
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Assistant, Ian Statham.

Assistant, David Westland.

The winner, Steven Westland.



Lloyd Mangram

LOOKS BACK

It seems amazing that a year has gone by since I was last handed the job of writing an article which looked at the happenings of a past year, for what was then an embryonic magazine with the peculiar name of CRASH. In looking back, I'm tempted to say 1984 was probably the year of CRASH, but I can't really concern myself entirely with this publication, as it's the software I'm supposed to deal with here! One thing I will say, is that it has been a hectic and eventful year for CRASH, with the magazine going from strength to strength, often threatening to outstrip the resources of the small team that puts it together, but it's been fun. Actually, I'm at a slight disadvantage, because my ever-ready CRASH Binder is missing issue one as someone nicked my copy before the binders came along, and then the issue sold out entirely! Anyway, here goes...

Spotting trends and commenting on them with hindsight, is the main forte of journalists, possibly because it gives us a feeling of superiority linked to a sense that 'we were not responsible'. On the other hand, trend-spotting is not only fun, it can also be truly informative. If I had to sum up 1984 very quickly I would point to the rise of the adventure, the death of the arcade shoot em up, the software slump, the dramatic improvement in software and programming, the rise of the TV/film/game link up and the mingling of arcade with adventure.

The year is going out, significantly, the way it came in. **Ultimate** gave us *Atic Atac* and pointed the way to arcade/adventures, a trend they have pursued relentlessly through a mere handful of four games to the excellence of

Knight Lore. **Ultimate** have steadfastly refused to 'talk' to the computer press, never appear at shows, have avoided all software house link-ups that seem to have been the way of life through 84, and have released very little, but very select, product. Obviously the public love it.

Atic Atac was pointing the way towards a new concept in arcade games, and suggested that arcade players didn't just want mindless zap games. Other software houses were to provide more such entertainment, but looking at the reviews in the March issue (many of which appeared at the end of January and during February), there wasn't much sign of it yet. **Imagine** seemed to be trying with *Alchemist*, but in truth the game was a lot of hot air and *Stonkers* kept crashing, though it did prove

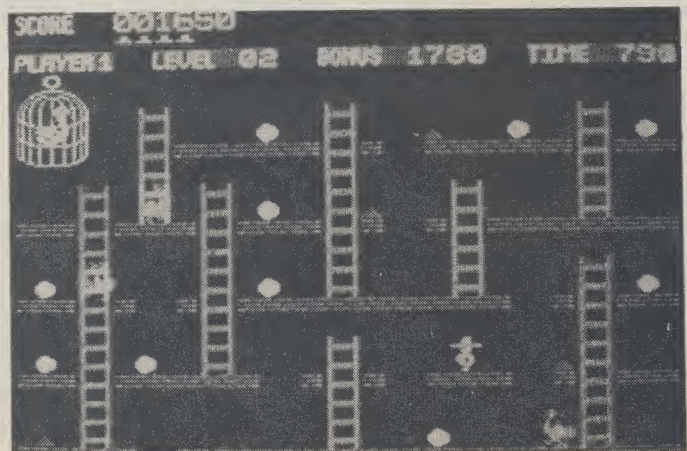
that a better looking wargame was a distinct possibility. Throughout 84, an obvious trend from 83 is apparent. In 83 everyone was copying arcade originals, in 84 they started copying each other, or is it just synchronicity at work. The March issue carried reviews for **Ocean's** *Hunchback* (a licenced arcade copy) and **Mr. Micro's** *Punchy*. Generally we preferred the latter, although sales of *Hunchback* indicated disagreement there. I'll call this the 'self-copy' trend, as it crops up again and again.

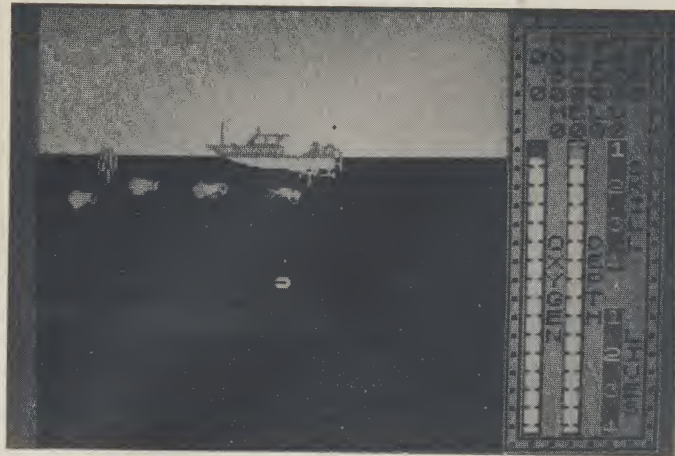
If arcade copies were on the wane, arcade high scoring games were not. **A&F** had their enduringly popular *Chuckie Egg* out, and **Fantasy** were climbing the charts with *Doomsday Castle* featuring super hero Ziggy who, appropriately enough, has emerged again for the end of the year in

Backpackers Guide to the Universe. **Chuckie Egg** has gone into the annals of history along with *Lunar Jetman* as one of the ace hi-score games. **Bug-Byte** modestly released *Birds and the Bees* on which Matthew Smith had worked and followed it up with the much better *Antics* on which Matthew Smith did not work. But Matthew's name was on everyone's lips with the news that *Manic Miner* follow up *Jet Set Willy* was imminent. It wasn't though. Two outstanding programs also appeared then, *Fighter Pilot* from **Digital Integration** and *Wheelie* from **Microsphere**. The former showed just how far the Spectrum could go (it's gone further still) and how exciting a simulation could be, the latter was just a damned good, original game with super graphics. Add to this the smart 3D graphics of *Android 2* by **Vortex**, and at times *Space Invaders* never looked further away. Not so, however, 84 has produced some real crock games too.

Quite a few crocks appeared in a self-copy battle to be the first with a real 'Pole Position' game. Ones that come to mind are *Grand Prix Driver*, **Britannia**, a bit unplayable but novel graphics; *Speed Duel*, **DK'Tronics**, completely unplayable and rather boring graphics; **Psion's** excellent *Chequered Flag*, which differed from the others by being more of a simulation; there was the scandal over rip offs from **Spirit Software** and their steering wheel version called *Formula One*, which when it finally turned up was a very damp squib indeed; **Activision** recently had a go with the novel *Enduro*; the best was probably **Micromega's** great *Full Throttle*; and last, not entirely least, the one that spawned the whole thing, **Atarisoft** have managed to limp out with *Pole Position*.

Back to the earlier months. **Durell** joined another self-copy with *Scuba Dive*, abandoning outer space for what





scientists like to call inner space. The underwater theme was also picked up by **Bug-Byte** in *Aquarius*, which wasn't so good, by **Richard Shepherd** in the awful *Devils of the Deep* and later by **C. R. L.** in their lightweight but fun *Glug-Glug*. Of all, *Scuba Dive* was the best and most playable.

Moving on a month, the crop of the crocks was improving as the Christmas 83 boom receded into the slough of despond. **C. R. L.** offered two completely pathetic games, *Caveman* and *Lunar Lander*. Music publisher **K-Tel** graced us with abominations called 'double-siders' and proved that music for pleasure is one thing but MFP also stands for More Failed Programs. It's a sign of the times that K-Tel took stock during the year, gave themselves a new marketing image in *Front Runner* and have just released the excellent *Boulder Dash*, which is so good it absolves them of their earlier horrors. March and April was also the time when that other publisher of music **Virgin**, who like K-Tel had never found a game worthy of the name, brought out *Dr. Franky* and showed there was hope for them. They too have improved their position enormously, releasing the odd but good *Strangeloop* a couple of months back.

Digital Integration proved that *Fighter Pilot* wasn't a flash

in the pan by releasing *Night Gunner*, more a game than a simulation, and **Artic** pulled themselves together on the arcade front with *Bear Bovver*. The uneven **R&R** started another self-copy theme in helicopters with *Chopper X-1*, a rather second rate game which paved the way for **Richard Wilcox** and *Blue Thunder*. Loath to leave a flying idea, the altered Wilcox as **Elite** is about to release *Airwolf* based on the current telly series. Just recently **Durell** have continued the theme with their excellent simulation/strategy game *Combat Lynx*, and somewhat belated, we still await **Digital Integration's** game based on a helicopter.

Going onto the May issue we were treated to a real mix of good and bad. Ignoring the bad, April/May saw the release of some excellent programs, among them Derek Brewster's amazing *Code Name Mat* released by **Micromega**. 84 could well be called the Year of Micromega, having started off well with the 3D *Deathchase*, **CNM** added to their lustre, *Full Throttle* polished it to a shine and the last three releases *Braxx Bluff*, *Kentilla* and *Jasper* have shown a willingness to go for the unusual and the best. **Hewson Consultants** also went from strength to strength, releasing the third in Steve Turner's Seiddab trilogy, *3D Lunattack*. The experience gained with



these games finally led to Steve turning in the advanced 3D adventure *Legend of Aviaon*.

We had been treated to a special preview of **Software Projects'** monster release *Jet Set Willy* and took screen shots of it which later caused much confusion because they didn't match with the actually

wrong with the program, and so it seemed. But the Attic bug doesn't seem to have put anyone seriously off enjoying the most torn apart game in history. You could almost say that *Jet Set Willy* was poked to death.

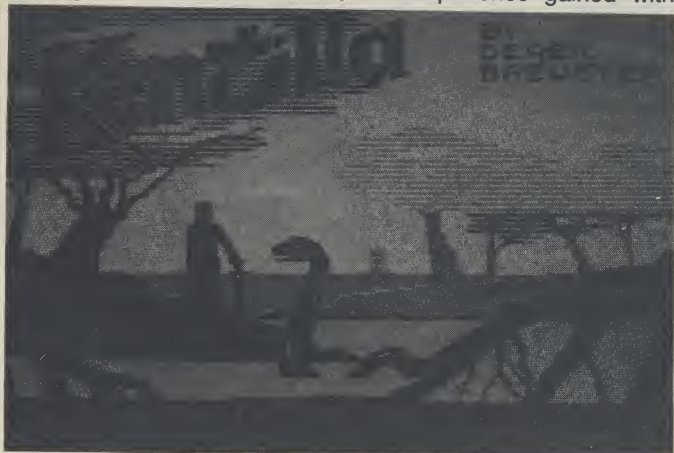
It was also the month that a new company called **Gargoyle Games** delighted us with an

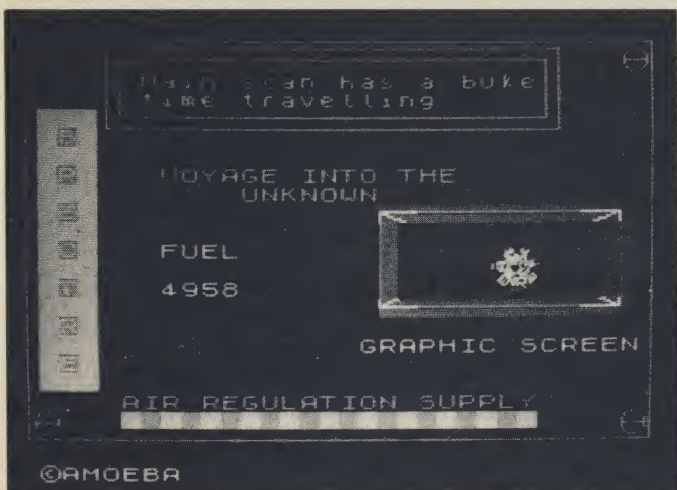


released game. One writer even accused us of faking as the preview shots showed screens all with capital letters for the under titles on some and a mixture of capitals and lower case on others, Matthew Smith would never do this we were told. But he did. There's no doubt that the release of *JSW* was the biggest event for ages. It wasn't long, however, before the ace hackers started complaining –something was

old fashioned shoot em up with modern 3D graphics called *Ad Astra*. We were all rather pleased with ourselves at *CRASH* because we were the first to spot the game and push it. Our faith has not been misplaced as Gargoyle's latest mammoth graphic adventure *Tir Na Nog* proves.

Insignificant at the time, was a game called *Space Station Zebra*, which we didn't think much of, from another new



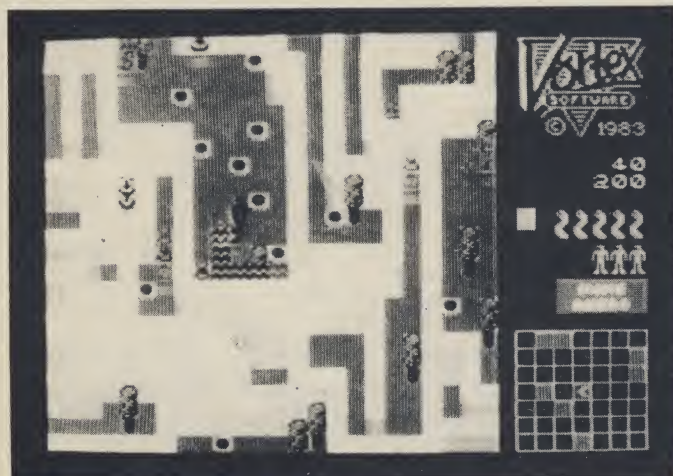


company calling themselves **Beyond Software**. Little were we to know (as they say in good adventure stories...)

After a long pause **Imagine** threw out the disappointing *Pedro* and prepared to nose dive into bankruptcy. Summer was approaching.

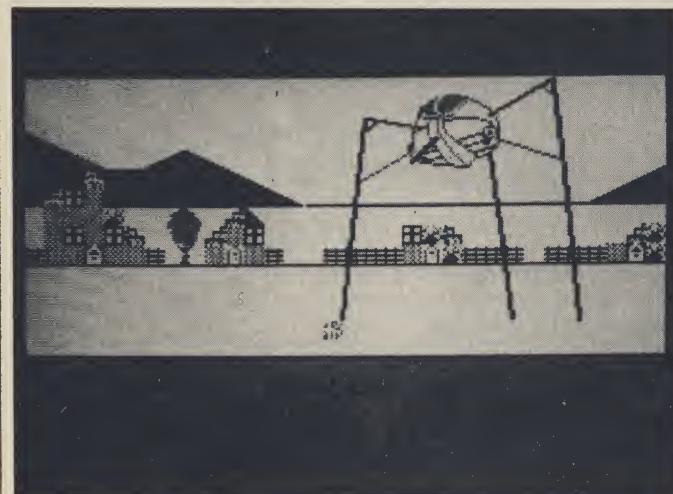
which has led many into argument over its merits. We liked it a lot. At the launch in London, we also got to see a glimpse of a new type of adventure/strategy wargame called *Lords of Midnight*.

June/July brought the summer slump into brighter



The June issue looked a bit thin on good games, the crocks predominating. **Hewson's Fantasia Diamond** gave adventurers a lot to think about, as did the second in **Incentive's Ket Trilogy** - *Temple of Vran*. Otherwise the only bright light really was **Beyond's Psytron**, a game

focus -hardly anything to report, but wait! **Ultimate** to the rescue! *Sabre Wulf* caused controversy over the almost doubling in price, but few argued with the game's graphics. We liked **Ocean's Moon Alert**, also a subject of a self-copy theme, with the **Visions Moon Buggy** and



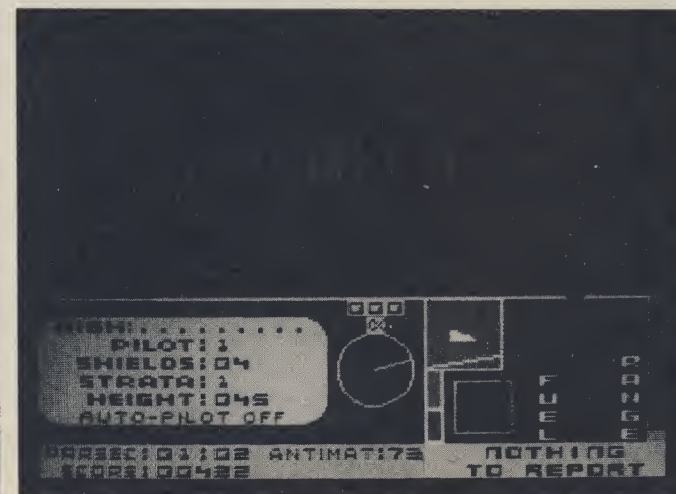
Anirog's game of the same name all out. **Rabbit** had also promised a Spectrum version of their C64 hit on the theme called *Troopa Truck*, but the company's demise quashed that.

Sinclair gave us a sudden spate of releases, mostly average to mediocre with the exception of the excellent *Stop the Express*, and **Imagine** continued down the slippery slope with the execrable *Cosmic Cruiser*. **Melbourne House**, now very late with the long-awaited *Sherlock*, diverted our attention from their problems with Philip Mitchell's graphic entertainment *Mugsy*, while **Silversoft**, very quiet of late, slipped out with the highly original *Wosre Things Happen at Sea*.

July/August saw the release and instant pedestal placing of **Beyond's Lords of Midnight**. One software house who always seemed to have just missed was **Mikro-Gen**, but with the creation of *Wally Week* in *Automania*, they changed all that, managing to follow it up with the more recent and better still *Pyjamarama*. Other high spots were *Rapsallion* from **Bug-Byte** and *TLL* from **Vortex**, both boasting strikingly different graphics. **Micromania**

made a bid for the hi-score stakes with *Kosmic Kanga*, and the month saw another brand new software house emerge with the capacity for fine programming - **Realtime** with their definitive 'Battle Zone' type game *3D Tank Duel*. Once again the **CRASH** team felt they were helping to create a software house, by pushing something they believed in, and once again the faith was not misplaced as **Realtime** worked on their latest release, *Starstrike*, now out.

July/August proved to be about as dead as it could get, with only a furious shoot em up from **Creative Sparks** to enliven proceedings. *Black Hawk* was curiously old fashioned, but fun to play. For adventurers the long-awaited release of *The Hulk* proved that graphics make adventures look good, but that more is sometimes required to make them good to play. **C. R. L.** take the credit for being the first software house out with the self-copy theme of the year - the Olympics. Their aptly named *Olympics* had been a gross disappointment, and **Automata's Olympimania** was a the usual load of anarchic fun, but **Database**, publishers of *Micro User*, were the first with a serious treatment in *Micro Olympics*.



SON OF BLAGGER



HE'S HERE! HE'S MADE IT!

Son of Blagger for 48K Spectrum

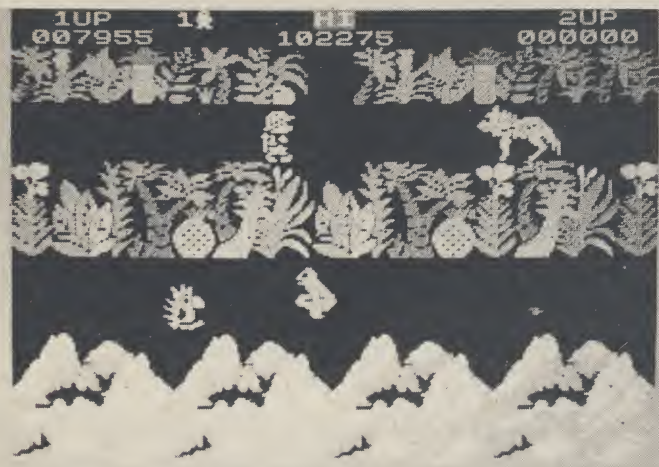
Relive the daring exploits of Roger the Dodger through his prodigy Slippery Sid. More skill, more nerve, this cool little character seeks not only to follow in his famous parent's footsteps, but to establish some amazing feats of his own. Money's not his game. Espionage is his middle name and having forced his way into the National Security HQ he's faced with a no return journey through one of the most dangerous, most complex buildings in the land. Can he successfully complete a nerve tingling search for the golden keys – his only means of escape – or this time has his skill and daring taken him too far. Watch out for those weird killer security guards – you never know what chilling surprises the mad scientists have produced – and beware the floor doesn't disappear from under your feet, sending you to an early grave.



Available from all good dealers
or direct from:

Alligata Software Ltd
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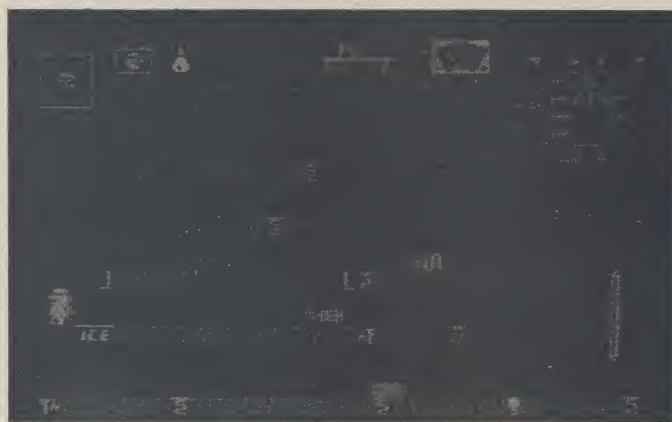
Buffer also did a program, and Melbourne House have continued the theme with *Sports Hero* as have Hill MacGibbon with *Run for Gold* (reviewed in the next issue), but the best liked is from Ocean with Daley Thompson's *Decathlon*.

Just to prove that although Spectrum games seemed to be improving in technique all the while a real crock could get through, Mastertronic got their adventure for all time reviewed after a reader wrote in saying we hadn't done it, and why not as it was fab. *Voyage into the Unknown* got, I think, the lowest rating ever from CRASH at that time. It was only beaten by Elephant's stupendously bad *Kosmik Pirate*.

With September/October, things looked as though they should brighten up with the pre-Christmas rush to look forward to. And in some respects things did. The October issue saw Micromega out with *Braxx Bluff* and *Kentilla* by Derek Brewster; *Frank N. Stein* from P. S. S., which proved to be quite a good platform game, while Silversoft were busy proving that old themes could be reworked to provide a tight new game in *Hyperaction*. *Sherlock* finally arrived, one year late and catching trains from the wrong station, and a

new company called Gremlin Graphics introduced us to the dusty wanderings of *Monty Mole*, possibly the first game to really look like it could steal the laurels from the as much maligned as hacked and played *Jet Set Willy*. C. R. L. started the trend of producing the game of the film by releasing the slightly disappointing *Terrahawks*, which was nevertheless a better experiment than their game of the music version of *War of the Worlds*. The competition for securing licences from Hollywood and Shepherds Bush is hotting up with Ocean and Elite fighting over *Airwolf* (Elite won this one), C. R. L. releasing the game of megahit *Magic Roundabout*, Activision scooping on the super hit film *Ghostbusters*, DK'Tronics securing *Minder* and *Popeye*, and now Elite have *Fall Guy* out and so on.

Which more or less bring us up to date, as the Christmas software fights it out to be top of the chart. Amongst the recent releases I have a few personal favourites that I would like to see do well, and oddly one of those is *Deus Ex Machina* from Automata. I think it's over priced, but I can see that it must have cost quite a bit to produce. I think Micromega's *Jasper* is very good, but I fear it will be, or already



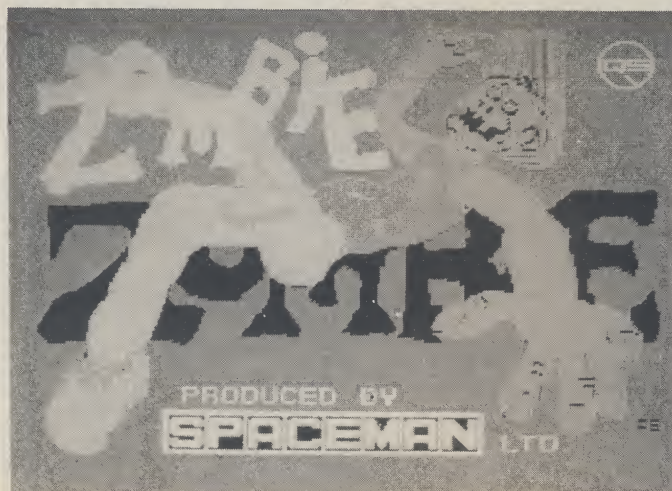
has been, overshadowed by games like *Jet Set Willy* and *Monty Mole*. It's different in many respects, however, and deserves to do well. Another favourite is the remarkable *Skool Daze* from Microsphere, which I like because it is realistic, anarchistic, and puts school where it belongs – in perspective. Most of my other current faves have already been mentioned in passing.

Company trends over this year have been all over the place. We have witnessed the disappearance of Imagine, Rabbit and Carnell to name some of the bigger ones. Rabbit, like Imagine, seemed in retrospect to survive more on hype than product, although Rabbit's hype was aimed more at the trade than the public, which was their huge mistake – they just couldn't see that no one wanted the rubbish they produced for most of the time. We have also seen big business move in with names like Thorn EMI (Creative Sparks) who, like Virgin and K-Tel made a reassessment of what they were doing earlier this year. Now Busby has a rival in British Telecom's *Firebird*; the overweight and sluggish Atari have tried hard to break in with over-priced versions of their arcade originals, but it all seems to be a case of too little too late.

A software house from the

earliest days who went quiet during the year is Quicksilver. Their *Fred* and *Snowman* made some impact but not as much as the earlier *Ant Attack* or *Bugaboo*. Concentrating rather more on conversions of the C64, they were bought out by Argus Press in the middle of the year, and I can't help wondering whether the loss of independence to a corporate giant won't lead to a greater sense of apathy. I hope not. The *Ant Attack* follow up from Sandy White, *Zombie Zombie* was, I thought, a bit of a disappointment.

One of the biggest successes has to be Ocean who started out as Spectrum Software, but through clever marketing policies, linking themselves to a distributor, buying in American software for conversion and careful control of product, have made themselves the true successors to the image Imagine tried to create. As if to seal that image, Ocean recently acquired the Imagine title. But what has also been most encouraging is that throughout 84, new and often small software houses have emerged, fighting hard and with often excellent product. They still form the backbone of this business and help make it all worthwhile.




GIFT FROM THE GODS



GIFT FROM THE GODS

"The Power of Destiny"

- Number 1 Blockbuster from the "MEGA TEAM"
- Spectacular arcade – adventure played in a multitude of ways and at many different levels.
- Watch the Secrets of the Labyrinth unfold as our Hero, ORESTES, tests his skill against the power of GOD and MAN.
- Stunning animated graphics take you beyond time ... into the "FIFTH DIMENSION".
- "INTELLIGENT" controls allow ORESTES to perform an astonishing repertoire of feats from the command of joystick or keyboard.
- Discover the key to "AGAMEMNON'S" puzzle, through the power of Intrigue and Illusion!

Ocean Software is available from selected branches of: **WOOLWORTH**, WHSMITH,  **John Menzies**, LASKYS, Rumbelows, **COMET**, Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers. Trade enquiries welcome.

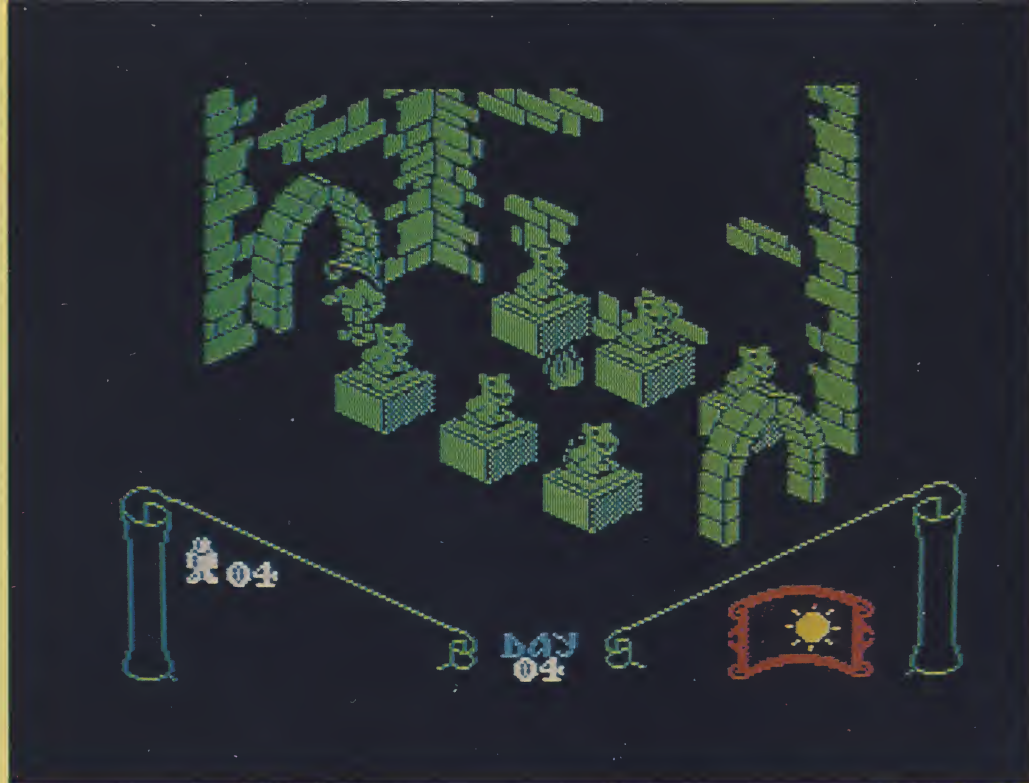
KNIGHT LORE

Producer: Ultimate
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £9.95
Language: machine code
Author: The ACG Team

It must be Christmas! You can tell by the fact that Ultimate has released two games simultaneously. *Underwulde* is the follow up to *Sabre Wulf* and *Knight Lore* is the follow up to *Underwulde*. Ultimate have been clever enough to ensure that both new releases are very different from each other in playing style and game design. Whereas *Atic Atac*, *Sabre Wulf* and *Underwulde* all played with 3D *Knight Lore* uses a very solid 3D perspective in which the 3D plays an important part spatially.

Our brave hero, Sabreman, is back again, pith helmet still firmly in place, but now roving the torturous rooms and passageways of *Knight Lore* castle to seek the the old dying wizard, who is the only person who can free him from the deadly curse (appearing in a pith helmet all day perhaps)? The old wizard, whose name is Melkhior, is like many another game wizard – he sets traps and tests to ensure that all who reach hi are worthy.

Knight Lore is played over forty days and forty nights. At the base of the screen a moon and sun symbol indicate the time. By day Sabreman is himself, but at night he changes into a werewolf. In either condition he is vulnerable to sudden death. The rooms are populated with all manner of spiky death and large stone blocks. In some respects *Knight Lore* resembles a 3D platform game, where the trick in each room is to discover the route and the methods by which you can reach the various charms which must be collected without being impaled on a spike, crushed by a falling ball chain or zapped by a poltergeist. Sometimes the ghosties are useful in helping you to move about, but panic sets in as the days run out, for after the fortieth day, Sabre-



Daytime Human explorer...

man, if he fails in his quest, will forever become a werewolf. Scoring is by time taken, percentage of quest completed and charms collected with an overall rating offered. As in *Underwulde* there is no Hall of Fame, largely due to the size of the program.

CRITICISM

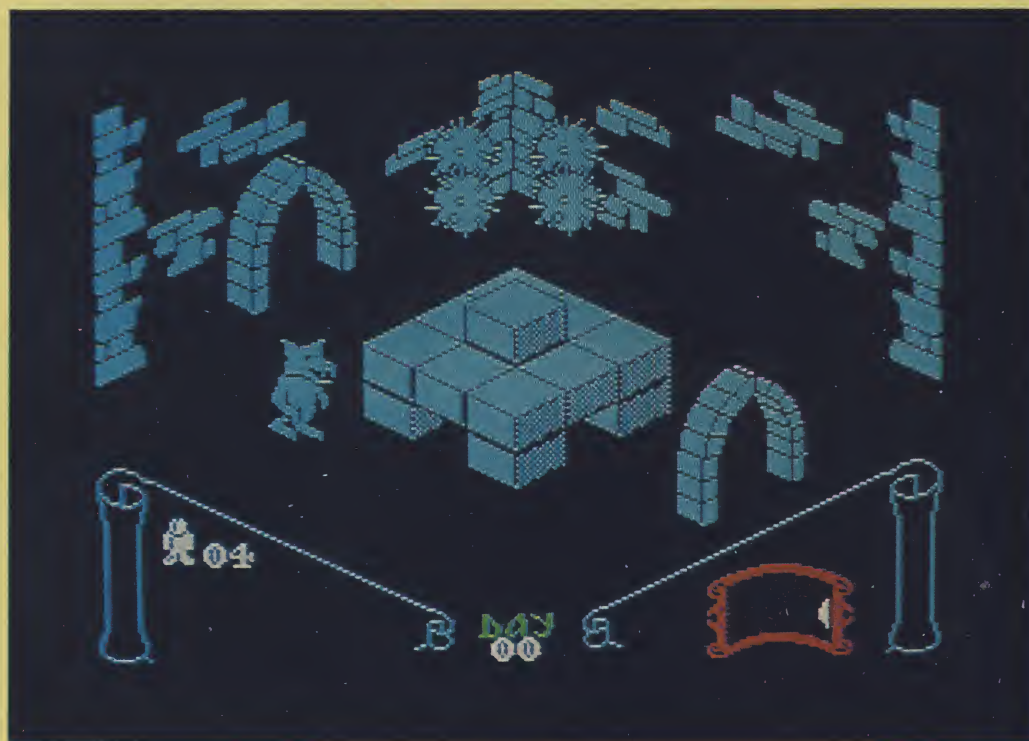
● 'Sabreman is back, but this time he's back in glorious 3D. *Knight Lore* is similar in appearance to *Avalon*, but the graphics are bolder. With that said *Knight Lore* resembles nothing I've played before. It is fun, addictive, but to sum up in one

word it's Brilliant! From what I can gather from the rhyming instructions you've got to put together a potion to stop yourself from turning into a werewolf – and one of the excellent touches in the game is the transformation from man to beast and back again. After a while I think I preferred the werewolf. The people at Ultimate obviously have devious minds because you only have to look at some of the rooms to see how wicked they are. On the whole I found *Knight Lore* slightly more

pleasing than *Underwulde* for two reasons; it's slightly easier and it's not as frustrating. Once again Ultimate have come up with the goods, *Knight Lore* is sheer perfection, get this for Christmas – you definitely won't regret it.'

● 'It's nice to see Ultimate depart from the Sabreman theme in *Knight Lore*. This game is totally different and original from anything they've done before – in my opinion it's the best game they have yet produced. Graphics are in 3D and use the new technique of masking, so that the moving characters do not flicker at all when they pass in front of

...turns night prowling Werewolf



K·N·I·G·H·T L·O·R·E



other objects, and only one colour is used per screen which avoids any attribute problems. This does not mean that the game is lacking in colour however, since each screen has its own colour. Some of the graphics are distinctly original, quite different to anything produced on the Spectrum before. The graphics are so detailed, imaginative, large and well drawn, it is impossible to complain about them. There is just such a lot to see and to explore, it's incredible and a joy to play. This game is full of mystery in the sense of why do you turn into a werewolf at night? What do any of the objects do, is a question I keep asking myself – just fun collecting them. Good use of sound has been made with some nice tunes. To sum this game up I do think that this is probably the best game yet produced for the Spectrum and it seems to me to be per-

fect in every sense. I honestly can't see how any real improvement can be made on this – well worth the £10.'

● 'Any Ultimate game is a thrill to unpack and load, but with *Knight Lore* they have surpassed themselves. The 3D graphics are so exciting to see that the fingers are instantly itching to get at the keys. A novel innovation here is the option to select what is called directional control as well as the keys or joystick functions. This adds eight directional movement to Sabreman, which is very useful in the tight confines of the 3D screen. The 3D itself is excellent, with marvellous drawing of the walls and characters, and Ultimate have used the hidden view idea very cruelly, so that a hint may be given of something nasty crouching behind a stairway – but you're never sure until it's too late. The most has been wrung from

the situation, for example, blocks may move on their own, sometimes they are carried by ghosts, sometimes they sink when you land on them, sometimes they vanish to reveal deadly spikes beneath. The animation is terrific from the smallest detail right through to Sabrewulfman himself. *Knight Lore* has that magical ingredient which makes it exciting to play and watch, and keeps you on the edge of your seat with anxiety. IT'S SIMPLY A GREAT GAME.'

responsive, plenty of options for simple control

Use of colour: excellent

Graphics: excellent 3D, marvellous design and imagination

Sound: terrific

Skill levels: 1

Lives: 4

Screens: not known, but loads

Special features: filmation, which allows you to do almost anything with the objects in the game

General rating: an outstanding game at the price.

COMMENTS

Control keys: alternate keys on the bottom row for left/right, any keys on the second row for forward, any key on the third row for jump, any key on the top row for pick up/drop
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very

Use of computer	93%
Graphics	97%
Playability	97%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	93%
Overall	94%

A Crash Smash

UNDER-WURLDE

Producer: Ultimate
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £9.95
Language: machine code
Author: The ACG Team

Ultimate have an uncanny knack of releasing games just too late to be able to do them justice in a review because the issue is usually on its way to 'bed'. But with *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* they were late enough that they missed the last issue altogether and thus gave enough time for this one! As is well known by Sabre Wulfers, *Underwurlde* is the second 'Sabreman' game, but arguments that *Sabre Wulf* was *Atic Atac* with greenery, hold little water with the new game. The perspective is different for a start – you view the game from the audiences'

view of a stage (which makes mapping rather harder!), although all the locations do logically connect to make a massive maz, seemingly bigger even than the one in *Sabre Wulf*. But one of the principal changes, and the first time that Ultimate have

employed the device, is that the nasties do not kill you off – they just get in the way. It is possible to die however! We've become quite

accustomed by now to Ultimate's oblique inlay cards which give the flavour but no playing hints for the game. Once again it's a question of



Swinging in the Underwurlde

U·N·D·E·R·W·U·R·L·D·E



Sabreman takes a tumble

sorting out the hows, wheres and whatfors. Sabreman, recognisably the same intrepid hero from the previous game, pith helmet intact from his encounters in the jungle, has entered the Underwulde to seek the Devil in his Lair and, of course, the way out. . . As with *Sabre Wulf*, scoring is by percentage of locations visited and a score accumulated by nasties killed and objects collected.

CRITICISM

● 'It looks as if the hyper load is here to stay because even Ultimate is using one now. Is the normal Spectrum loading system dead? *Underwulde* is certainly no *Atic Atac* part three – it's a totally original game that will keep you enthralled for ages. From what I can make out from the usual Ultimate instructions all you have to do is find your way out – simple enough, no! There are quite a few things to hinder and help you, such as the plethora of Ultimate nasties. But these don't kill, they just make you bounce about all over the place and the only way I've found to die is to fall a long way. This is a mixed blessing because when you seem to be doing well, you seem to fall a lot. Sometimes it seems practically impossible to finish a game when you want

to. *Underwulde* must take up every available byte because the maze is so huge and complex, something that became apparent after playing for twenty minutes and only scoring a paltry 10! Ultimate's graphics need no explanation, but an obvious item missing is the Hall of Fame (but I'm sure the spare bytes from this went to a good cause). Ultimate have come up with another excellent game featuring the walking, dancing and now jumping Sabreman (all the nasties in the underwulde seem to have scared him so much he's shrunk – or has he just had a wash to get rid of the jungle stink)? *Underwulde* is more worthy of the 10 quid price tag than was *Sabre Wulf*, so there shouldn't be any complaints about that. I especially liked the volcanic bubbles on which you can stand and ride, and the eagles which carry you all over the place. This is more of an adventure than *Sabre Wulf* ever was, so you will have to pick up certain objects to get past certain creatures. If you don't like the QWERT layout, then you will be disappointed to learn that it's been used again on this game, but I found it easier to use than a joystick because you don't need down much and the up key is also used for jump. You just can't fail with this game,

and if piracy means an end to games lie this, then piracy's not really worth it, is it?'

● '*Underwulde* is definitely Ultimate's best game yet. It has super sound and graphics, as you would expect from ACG, plus (as far as I can tell at this stage) an even more complex playing area than SW. Moving around from level to level by skillfully jumping up and down the screen is made even harder by the various Gremlins and Harpies knocking you flying in mid jump. Sabreman has lost his sword but instead he can use various different weapons for several different purposes such as getting past the guardians. I really enjoyed playing *Underwulde* and highly recommend it to everyone, although it's a shame about the high price.'

● 'At a first glance, Sabreman resembles Bugaboo the flea. It's that athletic leap that does it. This huge jump combined with the fact that the nasties don't kill but do hinder, makes playing *Underwulde* quite a different experience from anything Ultimate have done before – and it looks as though it should lead to some staggeringly high scores since killing the gremlins is essential if you are to keep your precarious balance! As usual, the graph-

ics, movement and detail is superb – so is the sound. It is important to get a weapon as soon as you start, fortunately there is the red bubble gun, otherwise you can get hemmed something terrible by the nasties. The frustration level in this game is pitched about right, and there is always plenty going on. I liked the ropes and the large gaseous bubbles – it's playing details like this that keep Ultimate well ahead in the arcade stakes.



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, R/E up and jump/down, T to fire a possessed weapon, CAPS to V drop from rope, B to SPACE pick up/drop a weapon

Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2

Keyboard play: very responsive, although the QWERT combination is awkward, all three reviewers agreed that they work quite well in this particular game

Use of colour: excellent

Graphics: large, smooth, fast and detailed – excellent
Sound: very good, although it is restricted mostly to 'contact' noises

Skill levels: 1

Lives: 6

Screens: unknown at this time, but loads!

Special features: hyper load

General rating: excellent.

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	95%
Playability	96%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	86%
Overall	92%

**LOOK ON PAGES
20, 21, 22 FOR
SUPER MUTT COMPETITION
YOU MIGHT WIN A LOT OF PRIZES**



Watch Super Mutt wing his way to the Isle of Dogs to rescue his chum. He'll need your help to lead him through his fantastic adventure, so pad round to your local shop, and collar your dealer. If he's out of stock let us know - we'll bite him!

The logo for Silver & Soft, featuring the words "SILVER" and "SOFT" in a stylized, rounded, outlined font. The letters are white with a thick black outline, and the ampersand is small and positioned between the two words.



Win!
With Silversoft
and Super Mutt!



Prizes galore in our brill contest overleaf...

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IN OUR SILVERSOFT COMPETITION

The new UNICOM MODEM has been described as a 'wonderful product'. Retailing at a mere £49.95, it looks set to outstrip rival models right from the start. It features auto-redial, auto baud-rate scan, auto-answer, full duplex and half duplex operation and connects up to anything with an RS232 or 423 serial interface. At the moment operating software is only available for the BBC home computer, but very soon all the major computers should be catered for. The UNICOM MODEM is not yet available on the market, but CRASH in association with SILVERSOFT has one to award to the winner of our joint competition.

Here's what to do. State in not more than 25 words why you would like to win the UNICOM MODEM.

entries to:

SILVERSOFT COMPETITION,
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW,
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

to arrive no later than first post January 18 1985



The prizes:

1st: The overall winner will receive a UNICOM MODEM and a complete set of SILVERSOFT games for the Spectrum past, present and future! This means not only will you receive all their software currently available, but also all the software they have yet to produce. On the previous two pages you will have seen the entire screen layout of SILVERSOFT's newest game, SUPERMUTT, just one of many that the winner will receive.

2nd: One lucky runner up will also receive all the SILVERSOFT software past, present and future.

Also, there are 100 consolation prizes of one item of SILVERSOFT software, together with a free poster. You can name the game of your choice, but the posters are standard.

I would like to win the UNICOM MODEM because

If I win one of the consolation prizes, the game

I would like is _____

Name _____

Address _____

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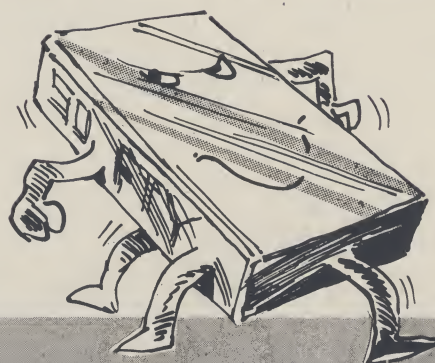
LETTERS



Each month I'll be choosing the best letter from the postbag, and, as well as publishing it, I'll send the writer £12 worth of software of his or her choice (it can be two cassettes as long as they come within the £12). I've had to grovel on bended knee to the editor for this, so you'd better be grateful!

Send your letters to **Lloyd Mangram, CRASH Forum, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. I can't promise to print everything that comes in because space is precious (I'm told) but I'll do my best.

It's been a busy month, what with Christmas looming and Kevin, the new member of the CRASH team, dashing around interviewing everyone for the article in this issue about how CRASH isn't put together (never believe everything you read in print)! As usual it has also been another heartbreaking month of trying to decide who gets printed. But I think there is a nice sprinkling of different letters here, including one from Ireland and one from Yugoslavia. There are also two amusing letters, one which is mockingly abusive about all of us at CRASH (at least I think it's mocking) and one which just goes to show how much games have become a part of daily life. I picked this one for letter of the month...



SOFTWARE KALEIDOSCOPE

Dear Lloyd,
One day, while walking down the road with my friend JASPER, I heard a voice from a dark alley calling my name. 'PSSST, FRED', the voice whispered. I turned round to see the TRASHMAN, DENIS who as usual could only be seen THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS. He had been up to his ANTICS and was totally PI-EYED. We quickly went over to the BARMY BURGERS restaurant where we asked Kenneth to look after him until help arrived. I tried to explain to Denis to wait with KENTILA (think about it) ambulance arrived, but by this time he was almost in THE HOUSE OF THE LIVING DEAD! We continued on our way down BLADE ALLEY but soon found ourselves in a CONFRONTATION with

MUGSY the URBAN UPSTART from the factory down the road, AUTOMANIA Inc. He was built like the HULK and had obviously made a FACTORY BREAKOUT or escaped from the LOONY ZOO. He was definitely no HOBBIT (more like FRANK N. STEIN), although he was a bit STONKERS, as he always travelled on a POGO stick.

We both stood SPELLBOUND, not quite knowing what would happen next. Suddenly, from nowhere, PAT THE POSTMAN in his super THRUSTA van pulled up alongside and told us to JUMP in. We ran towards him, and with MUGSY behind the DEATHCHASE was on. We finally made it into the van, and with a WHEELIE we sped off at

FULL THROTTLE. We left a furious MUGSY behind, and in his rage he tried to CHUCKIE EGG at our van, but missed.

'Our HERO' I exclaimed to Pat. He smiled modestly, always eager to consider himself DEFENDA of the peace. Pat dropped us off outside the chemist, and we watched him ZZOOM off towards BEACH HEAD. We went into the shop and said hello to Alan the Chemist - or ALCHEMIST for short. We told him all about MUGSY, and he promised that his brother Rommel would get him back. We thanked him heartily, looking forward to ROMMEL'S REVENGE.

Outside it was snowing, and just as I stepped out a large wet SNOWBALL went SPLAT! right in my face. I looked up to see someone laughing and JUMPING.

'JACK!' I shouted angrily. He came over and I felt like giving him a good PUNCHY, but as he was only at the age where he was still having the BIRDS a BEES explained to him, I TRIAD to be nice. He was dressed as a SPECIAL AGENT because he had always facied himself as something of a SHERLOCK HOLMES. 'Today I am using my CODE NAME MAT' he explained, and said that he had a MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA, my sister; I was to buy her a nice big GOLDEN APPLE, a jar of APPLE JAM and a take-away from MR WIMPY. What a GREEDY GULCH, I thought to myself, but did what she said. I finally made it to the newsagents after what had seemed like the QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL. I asked Braxx, the newsagent (who's German)



The Swordmaster Stir



if my copy of Crash was in yet, but she replied: 'Nein,' (which means 'no'). 'AHHH!' I cried, 'I'M IN SHOCK'. 'Don't worry,' she added. 'I was only kidding'. That's all I need, I thought to myself: a typical BRAXX BLUFF. She deserved to be put in front of a RIFLE RANGE for that. 'AUF WIEDERSEHEN PET!' she shouted. When I got home my DOTTY sister immediately complained of being very hungry after waiting so long for my return. To make matters worse, my Mum

scolded me for being such a RAPSCALLION. Just like those awful SKOOL DAZE, I thought, making my ESCAPE. I sat down to watch some WORLD CUP FOOTBALL on the telly, reassuring myself that after all, WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA. And as I settled down with a copy of my favourite magazine, I realised that I could ask for no greater happiness than a monthly dose of CRASH. . .

Craig Smith, Lincoln, Lincolnshire.

Craig is obviously a MANIC MINER when it comes to words, either that or his brain is a bit PSYTRAXX. But don't call him a BUGABOO or you'd better MINED-OUT, because he'll tell you to PUSH OFF. Still, it's £12 worth of software for the effort. AH DIDDUMS!
LM

RED PERIL

Dear Commie **** Merchants (TASS),
Listen readers, you are in dire peril. You are at the mercy of infiltrators. The staff at CRASH are not what they seem - they are really a bunch of Communist **** mongers! For example, take a look at Lloyd 'Fascist Bullyboy' Mangram. Printing all these arguments is his way of attempting to split the nation. Ultimately (sic - LM) he intends to convert the computer world to his dastardly ways: Communism! Derek Brewster is really a member of the Secret Police, out to engage the interest and co-operation of software houses and convert them all into Reds. Poor old Micromega have already taken the bait; as did Quicksilver and Neptune before them.
I pass on a warning: anyone loading Jasper must immediately grab their ear plugs and jam them in the appropriate holes, because there is, in fact, a Soviet brain-washing message transmitted, closely followed by a 'conversion' routine. Keyboard-bashers and joystick-wrenchers beware! The Frey brothers are worse than the Kray twins. They are the heavy-mob of the Soviet spy ring. Oli, peaceful artist by day, can easily be



transformed into a raging animal if his temper is aroused (you should see his pic in issue 2 - boy does he look mean!). Franco is the calmer of the two, and deposits his steel teeth in a magnetic field at night. His 9ft frame and 40in chest serves him well, but he has a brain the size of a peanut. Needless to say, Matthew and Chris are commies as well, after being subjected to endless brain-washing programs on their now-red Spectrums. To top it all I have reliable evidence (thanks Mr Blunt) that Roger Kean is a Double Agent.
The only person to remain unaffected by this is dear old Denise (subs). She is free

from all these bad influences only because she locks herself in the ladies room in order to paint her toenails, undisturbed. Yours democratically,
Sarbjit Singh Johal (15), Hayes, Middlesex.

I'm astonished by the frightening accuracy of your secret intelligence in matters relating to CRASH. On only two points are you in error. Firstly, I am not a bullyboy, as anyone will tell you, and secondly 'dear old Denise' doesn't have any toenails to paint - so there.
LM

STICK IT!

Dear Lloyd,
With reference to John J Tapper's letter, I would just like to say that I hate the way he makes out every Spectrum owner to be a snob with a rich daddy. I went to work for two or three weeks before I could afford to buy my 48K, so stick it bored and unemployed.
Anthony Grasso, Purley, Surrey.

Now, now. . .

EARLY ALARM

Dear Lloyd,
After reading about Pyjamarama in CRASH I thought oh great! at last a challenging game, and a CRASH Smash too. So I rushed out and bought a copy, but alas when I got to the shops I found that the game cost £7.95 and not £6.95 as advertised in your magazine. I borrowed the extra money from my kind, generous big brother (with a grovel, grovel, pretty please), paid up and dashed home. I had visions of hours of fun spent trying desperately to solve the puzzle. However, after just 12 hours I had solved it and awakened Wally. Can't the programmers do better than this?
D. Blasbery, Skelmersdale, Lancs.

Obviously you're above average intelligence for these arcade games - perhaps you should turn your attention to adventures and leave really simple games like Pyjamarama to idiots like CRASH reviewers.
LM

ROTTEN PIRATES

Dear Crash,
Thank you very much for your article on the Piracy Dossier, it made very interesting reading. I was particularly interested in the reaction to question 3 about commercial piracy. It strikes me that home copiers are simply passing the buck of the damage being done to the software industry onto the shoulders of the commercial pirates. While I would not condone commercial piracy in any way, the fact is that although it is morally worse than home copying, the latter is far more widespread and therefore far more damaging. Relatively few people own commercially pirated programs, while of all the people I know with home computers most have large collections of home copied programs.
Another popular excuse for copying software is that the games are just too expensive. I agree that most of us can't splash out six or seven pounds every day, or fill a trolley in John Menzies at regular intervals; but someone who has bought a computer for £130 can't exactly be penniless, can they? I think we've had the reason for the price of software very graphically explained to us by Shahid Ahmad (the Piracy Dossier), but even if the majority of games were to come down in price (unlikely) would home copying cease? I doubt it. The general train of thought seems to be: if you can copy a game for nothing, why spend money? Even if it is only a couple of quid.
Matthew Bannerman, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

Despite arguments from software houses that commercial piracy is on the increase, especially through illegal 'libraries' - illegal in the sense that they do not gain the essential permission of the software houses to loan tapes - there can be little doubt that it is the home copying which is the real bane. The answer seems to be hyperloading techniques, although they are not entirely proof. On the other hand, they are also inconvenient to the genuine buyer when the tapes won't load properly.
LM

RIP OFF COVERS

Dear Lloyd,
Having recently received back issue No.4 and filled in the questionnaire on piracy, I decided to write and express my views on the subject. I am a pirate and I have 197 illegal copies in my collection and only two originals. My friends and I have a small circle of about five contacts, and whenever a new game comes in they each distribute copies to their friends, thus beginning the software pirates 'family tree'. The main reasons why I pirate are: 1. Games are far too expensive. 2. The description on the inlay covers is nearly always wrong. When I pick up a new game I expect to see a screen photo and what the game is really about, ie s it fast? does it have smooth graphics? is it as bad as *Zaxxon* by Starzone? Most new games are starting to do the above. A shop in our town that sells software now has an illegal library club where you pay £1 for life membership and can choose a game to keep overnight for 50p. I am a member and can add new games to my collection very quickly. New programs are getting hard to copy now as a lot of games are becoming headless and won't load into any copy programs. *Automania* has proved to be the hardest to copy because it runs at twice the normal speed. I am writing this letter as a desperate plea to software firms to put their prices down. **A pirate, UK.**

I get the feeling that your plea will have to be a bit more persuasive than this, dear

Pirate (UK), since it seems to smack more of selfishness than genuine concern. The next reader has a slightly different view of the situation. . .
LM

CASTING STONES. . .

Dear Sir,
I have just finished reading your November issue, which I found to be rather interesting. All was well until I read the Piracy Dossier on page 130; lo and behold a letter from a Mr Shahid Ahmad of London NW1, proclaiming to the world that Mr Paul Watts is scum, stupid and should be castrated. He also states that Mr Watts is 'full of ****' (does this mean he swallowed four micro-drives?). Seriously though, I would like to ask Shahid Ahmad a few questions: Have you ever
a) Travelled on a bus or train without a ticket?
b) Fare dodged completely?
c) Photocopied an article of interest?
d) Entered a cinema through the fire exit?
e) Evaded paying tax on car or undisclosed earnings?
f) Copied records or cassettes and/or lent them to friends?
g) Copied or taped any TV programme or other pre-recorded video cassette and/or lent them to friends?
Although some of these questions may not seem entirely relevant, they all, in one way or another, involve fraud. If Mr Ahmad can honestly answer 'no' to every one of them, then fair enough, castigate Mr Watts by all means; but if, on the other hand, he has infringed upon any of the above then let him heed the words of a very famous cha who once said something like: 'Let he who is

without sin cast the first stone'. I would like to make it clear that I neither defend nor condemn th words or attitude of Mr Watts, and that I have never yet met anyone who is perfect in every way.
Frank Marrai, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.

I was once told by someone that it is impossible to be perfectly good, so if you want to be perfect, being perfectly bad is the only thing to do. Sounds like a paradise recipe for pirates. Seriously though, casting stones may be a good moral argument, but it is somewhat impractical if you're really trying to cope with this sort of situation. The sad truth is, that no one actually minds ripping off someone else, but they hate someone else ripping them off.

TOO EXPENSIVE?

Dear Lloyd,
I would just like to say that I am sick to death of readers complaining about the price of Spectrum software. The English computer 'buffs' just don't know how lucky they are with the price of games over there. Here in Dublin the cheapest and worst games sell at around £7.50, while the average retail price is about £10 or £11. The more expensive gams such as *The Hobbit* and *Sherlock Holmes* sell for about £22! How many Irish Spectrum owners would be only too delighted to pay £6 for a game!
The Spectrum itself costs £200 for the 48K version, £160 for the 16K version. Microdrive and Interface 1 each sell for £70, while a Kempston joystick and interface sells for £40. CRASH

itself costs all of £1.41! Not only do the software and peripherals cost a lot more, but they also take a lot longer to get here, and as the stocks are very limited they are usually sold out after only a couple of days. Certain software products or hardware items never even appear over here. CRASH usually takes about a week to arrive.

So in future, when complaining about things in England, just remember how bad it is here on the Emerald Isle!

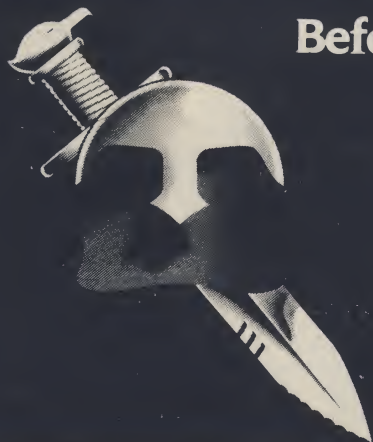
Michael Wood, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

Well you're not the first Irish person to complain about the prices of things over there, including CRAH. Still you're luckier I think than a writer later on from Yugoslavia who finds it hard to get anything imported unless it is a present. The next writer disagrees over the cost of software. . .
LM

UNDERPRICED

Dear Lord Mangram of Ludlow,
My view on software is that it is GROSSLY UNDERPRICED! Now please calm down; don't send the hit squad round (I won't be in). I want to add that I am not rich, and nor is my father; neither am I the sales director of a software company. I am in fact none other than a poverty-stricken student from the Trent Polytechnic in Nottingham, and I'm clever enough to realise that a good many of the top games now on the market are worth a great deal more than we pay for them. If we assume that the average game in an arcade costs 10p,

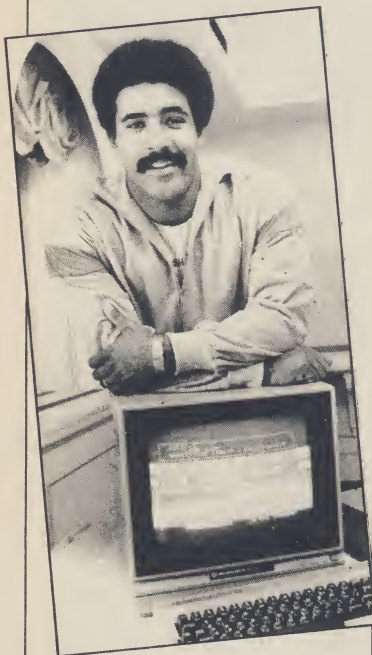
Before him lies the unknown



then a game which costs £6 should give at least sixty goes. Any game that provides more is very good value for money. Looking through the CRASH hotline chart I notice that several of the top games come under this category. For example, I don't know how many times I've played *Manic Miner*, but it must be over 250. I also reckon I've played *Atic Atac* 200 times, *Lunar Jetman* 150, *Chuckie Egg* 120, *Arcadia* 110, *Jet Set Willy* 100 etc etc.

When are people going to stop moaning about high prices and start realising what good value for money they are getting?

James Penwell, Beeston, Nottingham.



RECORD BREAKER

Dear Lloyd,
After reading the CRASH review of *Daley's Decathlon* (issue No.10), I thought I would write to you about an odd event that happened to me when I first bought the game in August. I was making my first attempt at the long jump when I landed directly with my back level to the line. I considered this to be a pretty feeble effort, but to my delight the scoresman measured out the rest of the pit and then the track, giving me a jump of 253 meters! Is this an Olympic achievement?
J Langstone, Solihull, West Midlands.

No – it's a pretty feeble effort. .
LM



SLOW GAMES

Dear CRASH,
This letter contains several points which I feel I have to make. The first and probably the most important concerns the length of time that software from other parts of Britain takes to reach Scotland. This is perhaps not so bad when it is just an ordinary piece of software you want, but when it's a piece of competition software it is utterly infuriating. This happened to me with *The Ket Trilogy* (from Incentive). I had completed the first two parts in record time (*Mt of Ket* in only one week, *T. of Vran* in under 24 hours) so I thought I had a great chance of winning the video. I waited patiently and eventually saw an ad in a magazine announcing the release as September 19 (the official release date) of the third part. I thought I would wait until it was on sale in the shops rather than order it through the post which always seems to take so long. Alas, it took nine days after being released to arrive in only one of all the shops in Glasgow that stock computer software! And it wasn't even one of the giants like John Menzies or WH Smith – instead it was humble HMV, better known for their records than for their software. I was disgusted to say the least. I had searched for that game every day all over Glasgow and spent more than £3 on bus fares in the process. All hopes I had of winning the competition were dashed because nine days is a great deal of computer time to lose. Surely, to be fair to all UK

CRASH readers who wait patiently for news, competitions etc., all software houses could arrange to have their games in the shops in advance of the release date to save frustrating hours (and days) being wasted.
Paul A. McCusker, Glasgow, Scotland.

Distribution of games software is still in its infancy and there are a few things to sort out before games reach everywhere at once. Even in the field of magazines, things don't arrive everywhere in the country at the same time. It's certainly an area which needs some further attention, but it has less to do with the software houses than it does with distribution and retail.
LM

FROGGER

Respected Sir,
A few months ago I read a small piece in CRASH about a software company exporting Spectrum software to France. It's about time too I say! I went to France last year and happened to take my Spectrum with me – probably illegal but I did bring it back. I stayed with someone I know in Paris and ran *Lunar Jetman* for him. He just freaked out guys, he really did! He couldn't believe it, and was bowled over by the standard of some of the other games I showed him (which were slightly easier). 'Sacre Bleu!' he said. A little later he showed me his own computer; a state-of-the-art MSX machine released a few months previously in France, the

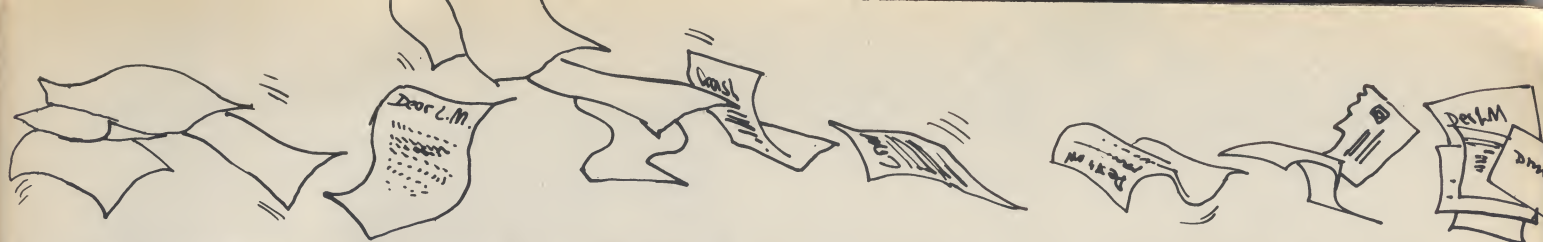
Thomson TO7. It struck me as the worst computer I had ever set eyes upon. It had flash moulding, built-in light pen, cassette-style plug-in ROM, about half K memory and a Basic to give Sir Clive an apoplexy.

The Basic itself was plug-in and the instructions on it were laughable. If this is representative of MSX I don't think Spectrum owners need worry about software being overwhelmed by drivel. If it brings in nother sector of the public – the Green Wellie Brigade – then they can fit MSX in their Volvo estates and feed them to the labradors for all I care. I really don't think there's any need to worry. By the way, what does MSX stand for? Mighty Silly Xpectations, perhaps. . .
M. Chatfield, Gosport, Hants.

The arguments over MSX will no doubt make for some interesting reading over the next few months. Our beloved Editor with brackets between his names has already stirred up a few souls to write in agreeing and disagreeing. The next writer has a few more things to say. . .
LM

LISTEN HERE ROG. . .

Dear Crash,
(To be read to a background of *Land of Hope and Glory*): Throughout history we, the British, have been invaded twice and left alone twice by foreign armies. Over the past 70 years or so we have held our standards high on the battlefields of Europe. We have fought in the air, on the land and on the seas, and our brave soldiers have died in vast numbers to uphold liberty, free speech and the right to buy foreign computers. Now believe it or not, we live in a capitalist society, first pioneered by the Americans. We live under the so-called shadow of their economic fist. And yet we, on this piddly little island are still under the impression tha British is best, forget the rest. Don't misunderstand me – I'm not being unpatriotic or anything. I'm just saying that if we're to make a success of economic cooperation we've got to buy our computers elsewhere as well as sell them elsewhere. Some may say that the Japanese are castrating our industry, butthat's probably



only because we didn't do it to them first.

'Here comes the MSX!' cries Roger Kean, editor of Britain's most influential Spectrum magazine. 'Let's tell everyone how terrible it is so that we Brits will go on buying Spectrums, which are three years old, have one channel sound and really amazing games!'

Now listen here Rog - don't you think you're preaching to the converted? I know as well as you do that the Spectrum is ultra-ace. But so is the Amstrad and the Einstein and, whether you like it or not, the MSX. Being a programmer for both the MSX and the Spectrum I would like to put the record straight: the British MSX has a 64K memory, including the screen memory, therefore making it 16K larger than the Spectrum. Despite the groans from what's-his-name at design Design, I have to inform you that screen addressing on the MSX is faster and a hell of a lot easier in M/C than the Spectrum. Hence: faster graphics.

You obviously feel threatened by the MSX. Never fear - I'm sure that 1 million Spectrum owners are't suddenly going to get up one morning and dump their machines down the loo! Neither are the software houses going to give up. For instance, all the companies I've spoken to are not doing new MSX stuff - just converting old Specy games. That's because Spectrum = money.

So don't worry chaps, MSX is no hassle. It's a good standard for Basic. But M/C capabilities (minus sound) are almost the same. Conclusion: the Spectrum is (in Basic and sound) worse. But MSX is on

the way. And if the Yanks threw it out, so may we.
Charles Cohen, Totteridge, London.

I rather got the impression that the Yanks didn't throw MSX out - they made it clear it wouldn't be allowed IN. Still, if nothing else, the arrival of the MSX machines has thrown some urgently needed light on the lesser capabilities of the Spectrum, which have been highlighted by the recent release of the Spectrum ...

deliver the goods.

I totally agree that we need a Spectrum upgrade NOW, not in a years time when the spectrum could well be dead due to the MSX invasion. Now that the Plus has been launched it can only be hoped that this upgrade will be in the form of an expansion pack to fit the new model. I don't think three channel sound, a sprite chip and something to enable more than two colours per attribute is a lot to ask for; after all, Sinclair graced us with Interface 2 which, when it

So after giving us Interface 2 which no one really needed (there were plenty of other joystick interfaces available at the time), how about giving us the upgrade that the Spectrum could well do with if it is to survive in he games machine market? Let's also hope that Parker make a ROM cartridge interface really worth having.
T. Henry, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.

Here, Here! Let's make it soon Sinclair!
LM



PLUSSE AND PLUSSE

Dear Lloyd,
No doubt flavour of the month at the moment is the new Spectrum keyboard, and while I can only praise the efforts of Sinclair Research to provide spectrum owners with a decent keyboard all I can say is that we've waited long enough for it! We've been crying out for a new 'official' keyboard for over a year now and it just goes to show how long it takes for Sinclair to

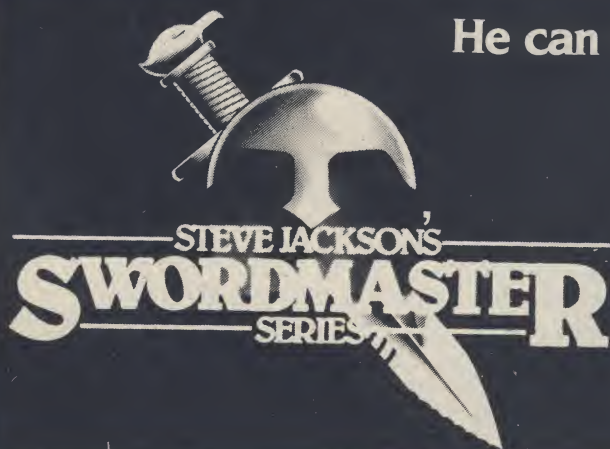
came out, was of no use to anyone, using non-standard joystick keys and ROM cartridges at £15 a time which were mostly of 16K games that only take a minute to load from cassette anyway, so why bother buying them?

Even now, a year later, Sinclair still hasn't released any new ROM cartridge games which are available only on ROM. People just won't pay £15 for games on ROM which they bought six months ago on cassette for £6.

MISSING PRIZE

Dear Lloyd,
I would like to inform CRASH readers of how much trouble I had getting my prize from *Computer and Video Games*. I was top scorer in the 7th Empire competition, and duly informed themagazine of what three cassettes I would like. After eagerly awaiting their arrival for a couple of months I decided to phone and find out what had happened to them. I was assured that they were on their way. This went on for quite a while, so eventually, tired of receiving the same old excuse every time I rang, I spoke to the assistant editor and he said he would have them sent on to me. I ended up talking to him on several occasions, and each time it was the same procedure: name, address, which tapes do you want, etc. In the end I got tired of this and told him that I knew very well he had no intention of ending me the tapes and that I would contact my father's solicitor. At this he sounded very shocked, but the games arrived a few days later.
So after about six months (and

He can rest no longer





a large telephone bill) I finally got what was rightfully mine. But I wonder how many other winners, less persistent than myself, have been cheated out of their prizes?

N. Faruque, Preston, Lancs.

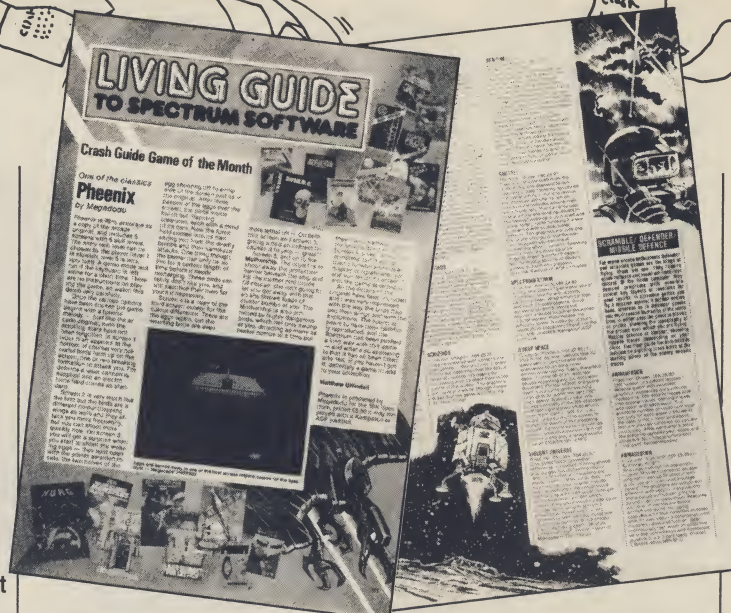
You sound as though you were very unfortunate in this matter. I'm surprised to hear it, although I can understand that it happens (I'm sure we aren't blameless either). Competitions are fun to have in the magazine, but they sometimes create all sorts of administrative problems, especially as the results are collated sometime before sending out prizes. This, added on top of inter-office communications can lead to such circumstances. It goes to show that perseverance pays!

LM

FUNNY FARM

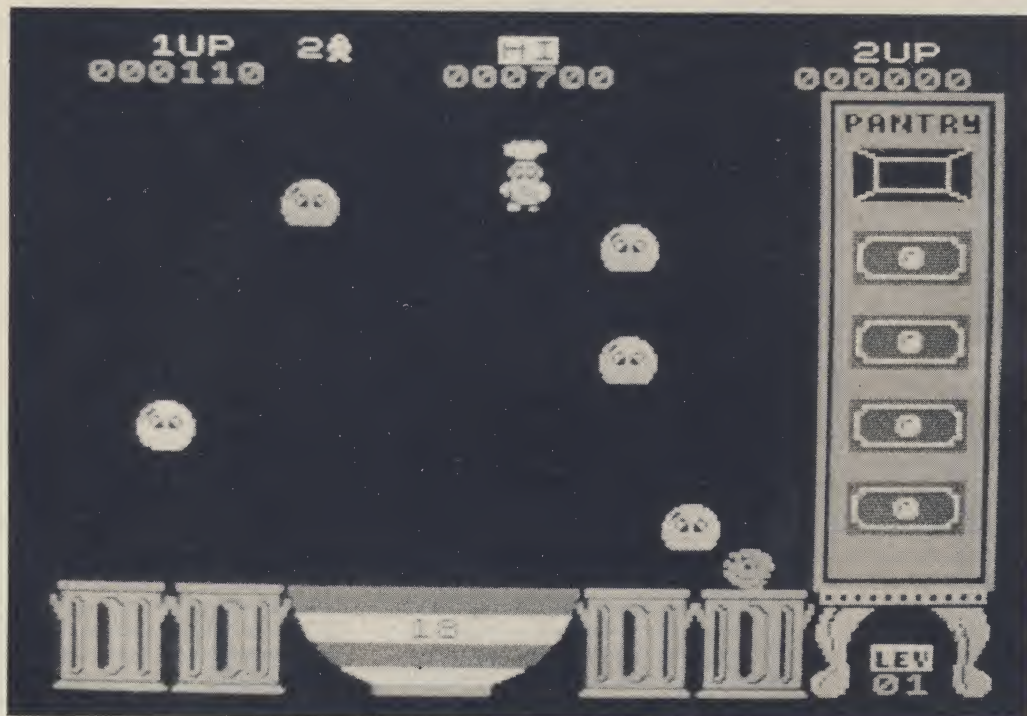
Dear Lloyd,
I am a member of a very special institution. It caters for those of us who have gone insane because we can't get staggeringly high scores on computer games. We are the people who manage to score the least number of points possible on games such as *Cookie*, *Pssst* and *Jet Pac* to name but a few. I am writing because we desperately need help. Readers should send in any tips they may have for the above games. Help on *Cookie* is the most important because

a certain person (who shall remain nameless) has not yet progressed beyond level two. The only plus point in this tragic story is that this same person managed to complete *Atic Atac* in only four days. This boosted his confidence quite a bit, and soon afterwards he went on to complete level three of *Pssst* and level five of *Jet Pac*. Lloyd, you and the excellent magazine you work for are the institute's last hope. Even as I write a 15 year old inmate is chewing at the straps of his eighth consecutive strait-jacket in a frenzied attempt to get at his 48K Spectrum and flush it down the toilet. Assistance is urgently required.
Doctor Steve, Royston, Herts.



sheer entertainment and readability your magazine probably beats the lot (except for *Micro Adventurer* - oops! Didn't mean to say that).

afoot to redo the Guide on possibly a quarterly basis. One problem is that the Guide was getting so long it was costing too much on



*I think the only remedy is to take four ****s after every meal, take the bull by the horns and turn into a microdrive.*

LM

NEVER TOO OLD

Dear Lloyd,
I suppose at 36 I'm a bit old to be reading your magazine, but must admit that I look forward to each new issue as eagerly as I used to await the computer des. Perhaps I've never grown up, but I feel I enjoy *CRASH* as much as any of your younger readers. I could be critical (as some are) of the spelling mistakes, but I don't care, because for

However, there is one thing my wife and I miss in the new *CRASH*, and that's the categorisations and potted reviews of Spectrum software that you included in the first couple of issues - we still constantly refer to them. So we hope ultimately that you'll be issuing either a supplement to your Christmas issue, or maybe an annual with condensed versions of all your reviews to date under the appropriate headings.
Neil Talbott, Bromsgrove, Worcs.

I don't think 36 is too old at all - the fact that I remember the first ever Beatles record coming out has nothing to do with it! There have been plans

*typesetting. Over the past few issues there have been a number of changes made to the way *CRASH* is typeset, which makes it less expensive to produce, so I guess the Guide will be on again before much longer.*

LM

ARTISTIC LICENCE?

Dear Crash,
Help! Is a long suffering Mum of a computer-crazy son allowed to air her views in your excellent magazine? It has always bugged me (see, I'm picking up the jargon already) that many computer games, tapes and their supporting advertising

material have elaborate illustrations which bear little or no resemblance to the actual graphics which appear on the screen.

I'm sure that in any other product this would constitute misrepresentation. The illustration on a box of chocolate cakes or a packet of fish fingers, for example, is always realistic, so why do the computer firms stretch the point to such an extent?

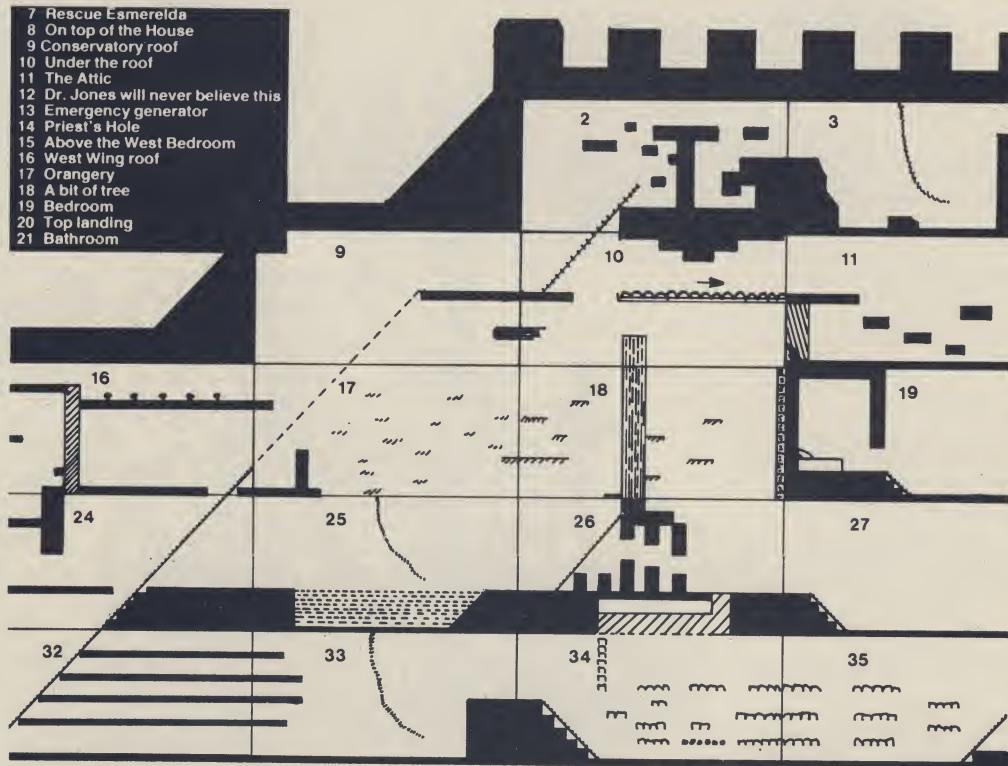
Some may say it's artistic licence - I prefer to call it a big con-trick.

Mrs D. E. Smith, Preston, Lancs.

Strong words Mrs. Smith! I must say, the pictures on packets of fish fingers and the like always seem far bigger, nicer and more succulent looking than the actual contents of the packet. Still, it's a valid point - but perhaps you should compare computer games more with books than fish fingers - packaging is part of the fun, as long as it doesn't exceed the dictates of honesty.



- 7 Rescue Esmerelda
- 8 On top of the House
- 9 Conservatory roof
- 10 Under the roof
- 11 The Attic
- 12 Dr. Jones will never believe this
- 13 Emergency generator
- 14 Priest's Hole
- 15 Above the West Bedroom
- 16 West Wing roof
- 17 Orangery
- 18 A bit of tree
- 19 Bedroom
- 20 Top landing
- 21 Bathroom



CON-SERVATORY ROOF

Dear Lloyd,
I think you deserve a pay rise. There, now that I've grabbed your attention I would like to say that J. D. 's letter about the legendary JSW bugs should start a flood of letters on the subject (a pay rise, surely?).

There certainly seems to have been an amazing lack of complaints in computer mags on this mega-blunder by Software Projects. Well Lloyd, please let everyone know that SP are definitely not having a competition with the final Miner Willy game at Christmas. I am a Miner Willy and SP fan, but I am disgusted by this decision.

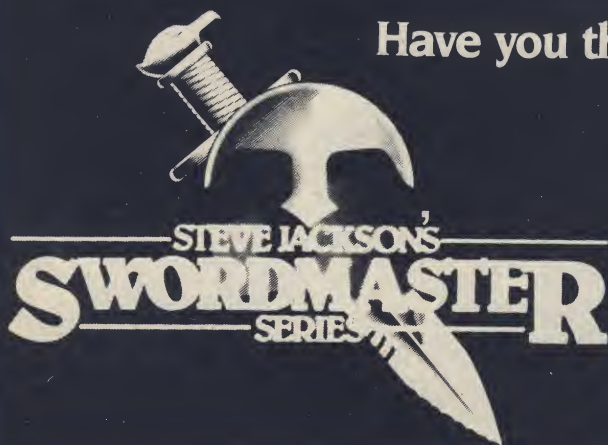
A friend and I were obsessed with the game and competition when it first came out. During our Easter holidays we spent over a week playing the game until six or seven in the morning, and then resuming playing after some sleep. We also amassed huge phone bills by phoning Liverpool time after time to ask: 'Has it been won yet?' or 'How do you do Conservatory Roof?'. The replies, of course, were always 'No' and 'There is a way'.

Our problems were complicated by the fact that a certain magazine in Ludlow had given us the impression that there were 64 screens in the game. Hence we concentrated all our efforts on finding those other four b****y

screens! (please note - CRASH readers now also talk in asterisks). I reckon you must have corrected this BUG in your JSW review, but we were unable to get this issue. We were eventually put right after a terrible week trying to get through the windows in 'On the Roof' (among other things) by SP themselves. Naturally, we were not too pleased with your mag, although it is still the best for quality and value. I wonder if other readers were led astray by your error?

Kevin Graham, Fort William, Scotland.

Jet Set Willy has certainly been a sore point with many readers. In defence of our preview of the game, we were



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only able to go by what we were also told at the outset, and there certainly wasn't time to verify everything before the real review was written - otherwise our reviewers might have won the prize! What it all adds up to, is that the competition was a bit silly in the circumstances - but I know for a fact that the inlay cards had been printed months before the game was released, and of course they contained the competition details which had been planned without any knowledge of the bugs in the program.

LM

BEYOND THE CURTAIN

Dear Crashers!

Very lately we received your package containing CRASH issues from June, July and September. I think it's not necessary to mention that now, after just three days of circling, those magazines look old enough to get into the museum of computer magazines! Yeah! It's really a magazine. The kids are not so good at English, but they were really screaming about the pictures in it. Three days and it passed over 20 hands. The same thing happened with *Your Computer* three months ago, and now our teacher - leader of the computer section in our school - is subscribed to *Your Computer*. Now one of us has decided to subscribe for CRASH, and when he has finished the counting of his £ you will have a customer in Yugoslavia. I'd like to thank you very much for sending us your examples and I want to inform you about the situation in my country so you can know what is going on here.

We're just really starting.

There are only a few micros produced here which can be used at home. But with software it's quite different. We are so far away from Britain, which now is the hottest place for computers (after the arrival of MSX especially), but a lot of

programs come our way, by some strange ways, so we can tell it's a lot of software available. Software makers in Yugoslavia are far ahead in Hardware, and the things we do are, or can be, on a level with all other software writers in the world. Here in our club



section studio we have now gathered some real talents in all stuffs of art and programming. We do graphics that are much like those in *Mugsy*, some animation, cause we make movies too. Very closely we done a title for a TV using some Superload-routines and of course our own capabilities. Now we have an idea of creating computer music, yes, totally computer music. Spectrums, Commodores and a little Casio 602-P could really mak a good noise. This music will be done with no acoustics, just wires. So, for a vocal we need a thing that we just cannot get - a speech synthesiser. We will be pleased if you can help us get a speech synthesiser. A CURRAH is not so expensive, but it needs to be a present from some foreign firm before it can be legally imported. So if you can help us, send it as a present to us and we will draw you back with some other things. We can offer you our drawings to use in your magazine with our permission. I think they are worth that money. And if you agree, we will send you some originals of them. Please help us! Thanks for everything you've done for us and best wishes for CRASH from the people of Novi Sad.

Dragen Stieglitz, Novi Sad, Yugoslavia

After such lovely compliments how can we refuse. I'll have to see whether the contingency Forum budget will stretch to a speech unit for you! (If HE allows it).

Well this lot of letters has filled up two whole files on my word processor - so I guess that's it for this issue - and indeed for this year. See you in 1985.

Lloyd Mangram

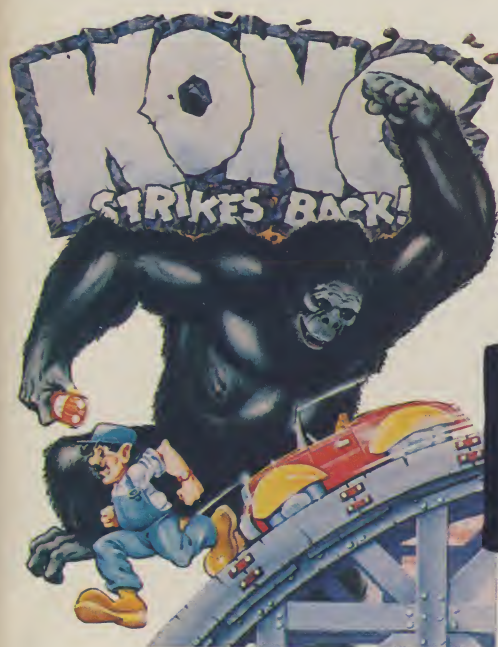
If you have anything you would like to say to other readers about software, hardware, programmers, piracy, whether praise or complaint or whether it's just something you want to get off your chest; write to LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. Please do not enclose any mail order forms or payments in Forum letters as these do not get processed the minute they come in, which may result in delays of your mail order deliveries.



the good

Yeh, only the good will survive in this the Superstar's (that's me), first supa-game. ... "Roland's Rat Race". Yeh, I'll really need your help, Rat Fans, to wind my way through the underground Rodent World of ladders, lifts,

bats and all kinds of creepy crawlies, where I must find the keys to free my furry friends. I can't wait to use my glue gun ... "Stick 'em down!" ... on those monster meanies. See you on your screen, from your cuddly, adorable me. ... Roland Rat, Superstar.



the BAD

The fun of the fair and the fury of Kong! Now you can know what it feels like to be a dodgem, only this time you're running up and down the Roller Coaster dodging the cars, giant buns and jumping springs. But the fun has only just begun!... wait

until the fury starts! The wacky Waltzer and the zany Swinging Gym are enough to unhinge the sanest fun fair fanatic. **Kong Strikes Back** is all good fun but it's bound to bring out the bad in you!

Ugh! The Hunch is back! Your favourite bell ringer, the all-conquering Quasimodo, swings into action on another breathtaking, action-packed extravaganza. Set the bells sounding and Esmerelda's heart pounding with Quasi's astounding derring dos and athletic antics. The bats in the belfry may send you bonkers but be as bold as brass, give yourself a pat on the hump and, WATCH THAT FIREBALL! ... phew! ... Our hero's revenge is a winner all the way, yes, it's definitely for you ... hoo!



the Ugly!

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GOLD DIGGER

OK sport, welcome to down under. Time was when those pesky misers weren't chasin' us around and things were a sight easier. Droppin' rocks on 'em will slow 'em down some!

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BACKPACKERS GUIDE To The Universe (Part 1)

Producer: Fantasy Software
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £7.50
Language: machine code
Author: Bob Hamilton

In collating this review the office was full of odd sounding comments like, 'What's a Googly Bird like to do?' Reply: 'Sleep mostly -with it, because Fluffels lick everything to death.'

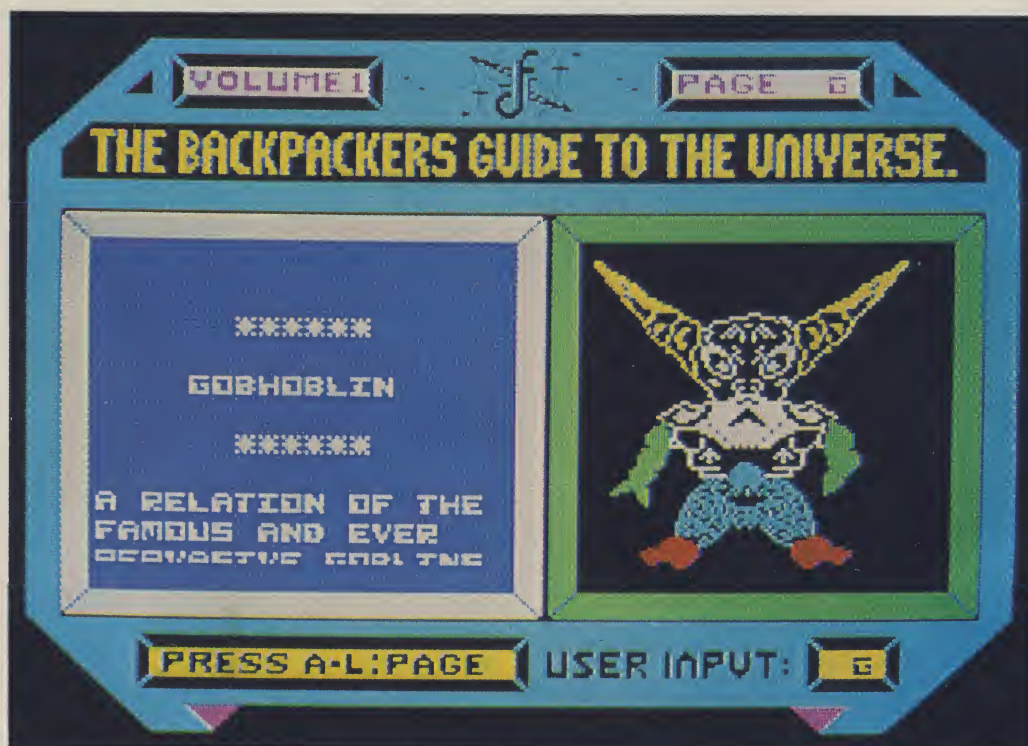
There was a time when army commanders were cautioned to make sure their men looked after their feet properly and everything else would be okay. That was in the days when men marched everywhere. The old caution is a good pointer to playing *Backpackers Guide to the Universe*, because in Part 1, your main task is to collect a hit squad of wierd aliens who have been isolated in cages on the Planet of Exile, in order to go up against the egregious Scarthax who is threatening to pull the Great Plug of the Universe.

Fantasy's favourite hero Ziggy is back in the saddle - or to be more accurate - in the harness of his backpack. The backpack is quite a marvellous invention (see the October issue of *CRASH* for more details!), which is capable of holding all the various wierdos that Ziggy frees. The problem is knowing what also to collect to both feed them and keep them happy so that they won't die of heartbreak or become a meal for some other creature.

To help you in your nursemaid-ing task is the *Backpackers Guide* which is located on the reverse side of the cassette from the actual game. This colourful device will introduce you to the creatures and their needs. Ziggy's backpack also allows hi to fly about, but it uses up more energy than walking, as does use of the flamethrower which deflects the wraiths that flit about the planet's caverns. Contact with the wraiths also depletes energy. When the energy runs too low you will be beamed back to the main capsule and repair time is added onto your overall playing time. This is the interesting facet of *Backpackers*. The three projected parts must add

Now, at this present moment, playing the game it gradually became apparent that my expectations were set too high. Graphics are very bright, detailed and imaginative, but nothing really seems to move other than the wraiths, which is a great pity for this game. As time goes by it would have been more fun if the wraiths had developed into more evil and deadly enemies and changed from their fluffy look to a more aggressive look. As it

seem to be very well animated either. I'm sure his thin pegs are the reason why he doesn't walk very quickly (probably because thy are so weak). This game has many good points and will probably provide many hours of enjoyment in strategically capturing, feeding and nursing this planet's wierd but wonderful creatures and taking them back to your space capsule. Other than this though, there doesn't seem to be a great deal of addictive qualities.



up to only the 24 hours Scarthax has given the Universe before he pulls the plug. To have any hope of getting through to complete all three parts you must complete part one in under 12 hours (real time), which is why something like backpack repair time is important. At any time during play you can press SYM SHIFT and a blue status box appears with scrolling information. This informs you of amount of backpack damage and interesting details like how your creatures are doing.

Backpackers Guide to the Universe Part One is played in a giant complex of caverns, a large maze, in which keys and useful objects constitute a large adventure and strategy element.

CRITICISM

● 'Having previously seen a preview of the program I had high expectations of the game.

Just one of many zoologists dreams

stands *Backpackers* seems to lack in 'action content'. Saying this, the game does not lack content - a vast amount of strategy is needed to collect all the creatures out of this huge maze of caverns and to keep them all alive. This where the marvellous *Backpackers Guide* comes into its own and provides many hours of enjoyment just reading what creatures are, what they like and what they dislike. Ziggy, my favourite super hero since *Pyramid* was brought out, now has this wonderful backpack - it's marvellous what this device is capable of doing. When Ziggy flies, he moves very quickly, accurately and it's fun to control him when he's doing so. Walking is a different matter - why has my favourite super hero got such spindley insignificant legs? They don't

● 'At last *Backpackers* has arrived, and with it the even longer awaited return of Ziggy. When you see *Backpackers* you will see that it has truly amazing graphics which would benefit just about any game! *Backpackers* has the ingredients for a really great game, b graphics (no sound though), Ziggy, a brilliant plot and not forgetting the wierd and wonderful creatures which inhabit the Caverns of Exile. But sadly, the game didn't relly grab me. I don't know why but I just didn't find enough action in the game to keep me compelled for long. But with that said, it's still an enjoyable program which I'm sure many will like. On the B side of the tape is the *Guide* which I must say is a delight to read and it provides vital information on the conservation of

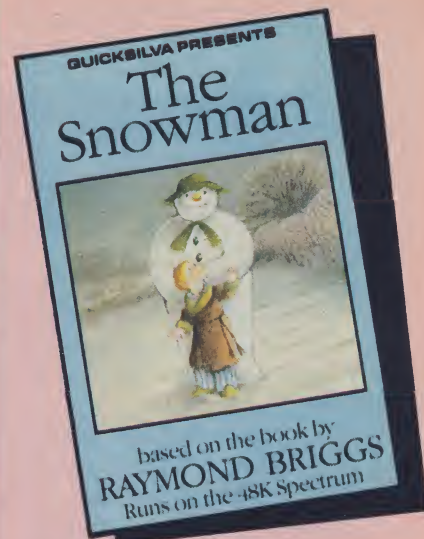
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ASTRONUT

Producer: **Software Projects**

Memory required: **48K**

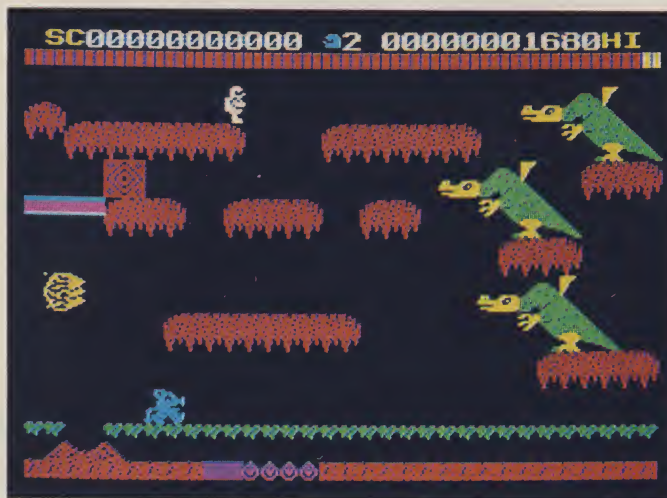
Retail price: **£5.95**

Language: **machine code**

Author: **Patrick Richmond**

Underneath one more of Software Projects lively inlay covers is a colour entry code card and THE STORY: After weeks of waiting the Space Freighter has nearly reached your settlement on Planet CS – but disaster...

A sudden meteor shower has devastated the ship, and its cargo of Resource Blocks has been scattered over the planet. The people have elected you to journey outside the settlement and round up the Blocks. Unfortunately this is unexplored terrain and there are many dangers – naturally. In fact there are 15 varying



You'll have to box clever on this one

screens in what is basically a novel platform game with very simple control keys. At the base there is the flashing transporter base onto which the Resource Blocks (three per screen) must be pushed. These blocks appear in awkward

places on the screen and Astronut moves them by pushing against them until they fall from one level to the next one down and so on until they can be pushed onto the transporter block, at which point the next one appears somewhere. Vol-

canoes or stairs automatically whisk Astronut upwards and he may jump down from any height. Various aliens waft about causing mayhem, but Astronut may leave behind bombs to destroy them, although the bombs have a time delay on them.

Any of the 15 screens may be entered at the start of a game by the select menu, and each of these is quite different from any of the others, with its own distinct problems.

CRITICISM

● 'Astronut lives up to Software Projects' standards. It has some excellent graphics (and imaginative ones). The game itself is very playable and has that magical addictive quality about it. Not MM or JSW but it is still excellent (in some ways even better, like the bigger, more colourful graphics). Another winner from Software Projects. (It's a pity the screens don't have names – a competition perhaps?)



Knock knock, what's there

your animals after you have freed them from their cages. I mean how else would you know that you feed Urks on teabags and that the Fluffelump is a blood sucker (it looks quite cute actually). Overall Backpackers is a fun program but it had limited appeal for me.'

● 'Here is a game that will appeal to those who enjoy adventure and strategy games and want an arcade game that isn't too demanding on reaction skills. It's true that you have to be able to avoid the wraiths, but the real skill in Backpackers lies in collecting the creatu-

res from their cages and discovering the useful items that help to keep them alive, as well as coping with the other useful objects that help you in your quest. These include keys which allow you to withdraw some of the stalectites and stalegmities and ind shortcuts. All this is done to a background of wit and humour and marvell-

ous graphics. Ziggy flies very well, although the animation on his walking about is a little thin. With the second and third parts yet to come, Backpackers should prove to be a big hit and a very involving game,

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q/A up/down, bottom row to fire (when flying) and to pick up (when walking), BREAK to beam back to capsule, SYM SHIFT for status report

Joystick: Sinclair 2, Protek, AGF, Kempston

Keyboard play: responsive and well laid out

Use of colour: excellent

Graphics: excellent,

imaginative and varied

Sound: none

Skill levels: 1

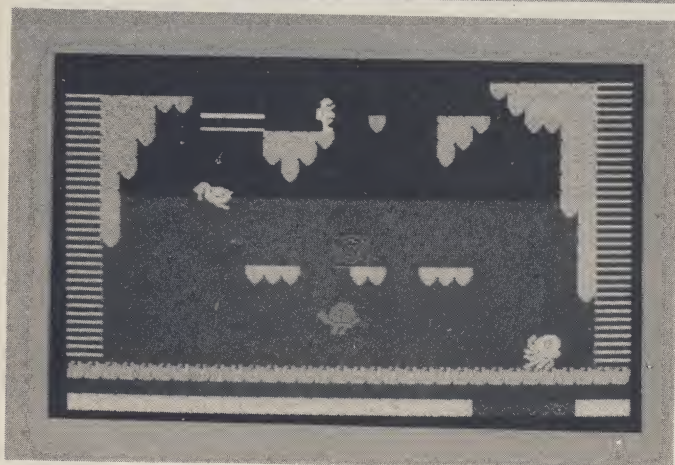
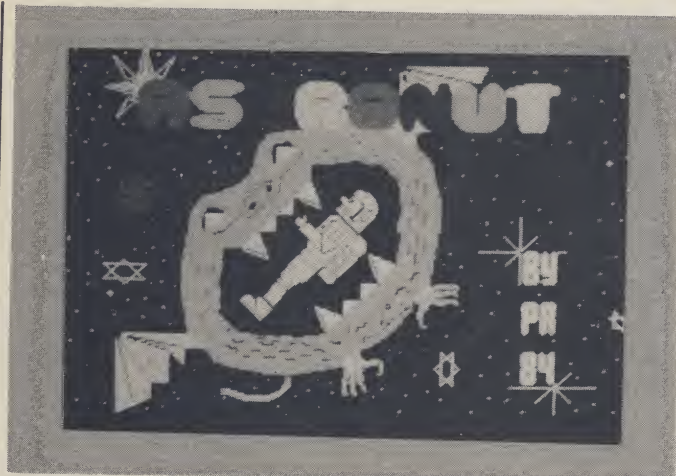
Lives: N/A

Screens: not known, but loads

Special features: game on side 1, guide on side 2 of the tape

General rating: perhaps lacking on the action side, otherwise an original and excellent program.

Use of computer	82%
Graphics	87%
Playability	81%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	83%



● 'Astronut is one of those magical games that looks simple to play and indeed is simple to play but difficult to get through! The combination of volcanoes which whoosh you up but only at a given second, and the opening/closing platforms that get in the way, often stopping you half way up when you wanted to go all the way up, makes for a very jolly game with plenty of addictivity. It's a pity that Software Projects forgot all the instructions to tell you the keys, they're neither on screen nor the inlay. The level select menu says to use Z and X, which indicates those keys for left and right, but I spent a while looking for up and down before realising they weren't needed, and did a lot of dying before I realised you could drop bombs. Still, an excellent game.'

● 'The first thing that really strikes you about Astronut is the lack of instruction. Well, after sorting out the key problem I could start playing Astronut which is similar in appearance to JSW but plays in a way similar to a 'Pengo' game. I quite enjoyed playing this one which is both challenging and fun and has quite a few screens to

keep you happy for a while. Overall Astronut is a standard platform game, graphically very good and a good game generally.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: not stated anywhere, but they are Z/X left/right and ENTER to drop time bomb

Joystick: Kempston

Keyboard play: very simple, and responsive

Use of colour: excellent

Graphics: very good, varied and detailed

Sound: continuous, but with on/off facility (Q)

Skill levels: only 1 but each screen has a different problem

Lives: 3

Screens: 15

General rating: very good to excellent, addictive and playable.

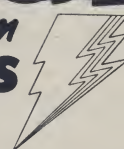
Use of computer	80%
Graphics	87%
Playability	84%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	83%
Value for money	84%
Overall	81%

GOOD GRIEF!
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DANGER MOUSE

Two great new games from
CREATIVE SPARKS



LODE RUNNER

Producer: **Software Projects**

Memory required: **48K**

Retail price: **£5.95**

Language: **machine code**

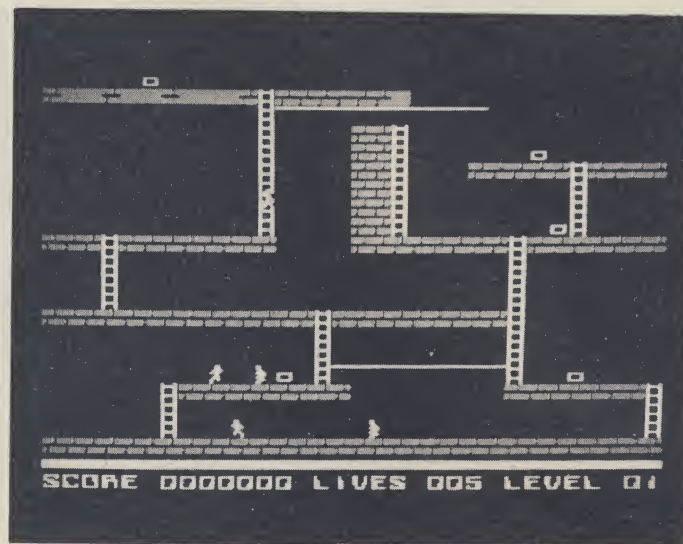
You are a highly trained Galactic Commando deep in enemy territory. Power hungry leaders of the repressive Bungeling Empire have stolen a fortune in gold from the peace loving people, and you have just discovered their underground treasury. Your aim in life is to recover every single ingot.

So Software Proj describe this manic arcade game with over 150 different screens, and a customising facility for you to design your own screens and save them to tape.

In fact, what we have here is a mammoth 'Panic' style game where the traditional digging function is actually an

important part of the overall strategy. The screens are made up of numerous variations on the theme of brick blocks, ladders and bars, with the gold stacked here and there, often in seemingly inaccessible places. The Bugeling agents swarm all over the place after you, with one disadvantage - they can't leap up large blocks - but then, neither can you. What you can do is dig holes for them to fall into, out of which they spring after a few seconds. You can dig holes to get at the inaccessible gold too, and the longest possible fall does not kill you off.

A nasty touch is that the holes heal themselves after a while, and as you can't jump out of them like the nasties, you get concretised in! This factor is important on screens where the gold is deeply buried under brick, as you can only dig a hole through a layer if there is more than one block missing on the layer above it. This means having to dig out several blocks length in order to have the room to dig downwards for three or four



blocks. Meanwhile they are filling in above you and the nasties are leaping down on top of you.

Because of the huge number of screens, there are 75 on one side of the tape and 75 on the second side. Access to any playing screen is available - they don't expect you to wade through all of them to complete the game!

CRITICISM

● 'Lode Runner is evidence that you don't need mega graphics to make a great game, just a good idea. All of the graphics in this game are small, one character size, and don't have all sorts of decoration. But the game is great fun to play. It has a high



POTTY PIGEON

Producer: **Gremlin Graphics**

Memory required: **48K**

Retail price: **£6.95**

Language: **machine code**

Author: **S. Hollingworth**

This is Gremlin Graphic's Spectrum follow up to *Monty Mole*. Originally released first on the CBM64, *Potty Pigeon* on the Spectrum is quite a different game and in a way more complex. The pigeon owns a nest in a tree with three ever-hungry chicks in it. What they want is worms and loads of them. Here and there across the linked screens there are wiggly worms sticking their silly heads up above ground. Potty

has to go around and collect them, one at a time, and fly them back to the nest. This costs him a lot of energy, which is replenished by catching the mayflies, not an easy task as they dart about. Although if he walks his energy level also goes up.

Life would be just too easy for Potty if it weren't for those little hazards that make life interesting. In this case these include a busy helicopter, snap dragons, frogs, angry red birds, spiders and cars on the road in some screens (it was the cars that made up all of the CBM64 version). The landscape itself also poses problems as objects cut up the playing space, forcing Potty to fly dangerously close to some hazards. His sole means of defence is a natural function which pigeons have a habit of using all the while. It stuns the nasty for a few moments!

CRITICISM

● 'Monty Mole was hard to follow, *Potty Pigeon* is a good game but not in the super league! Generally the graphics are good, but are not all that exciting. The collecting theme here is not a new idea - it is

alright but not very addictive. *Potty Pigeon* will not be remembered as much as *Monty Mole*, once a standard is set it has to be kept up to. Good but uninspiring.'

● 'Potty Pigeon is similar to the CBM64 version in name only. Feeding your chicks is no easy feat. The first load of screens are simple but on later levels it really gets hard. The graphics are good, though some of them are a bit small. The game itself is extreme fun to play and produces many thoughts such as, 'I've got to do better next time.' *Potty Pigeon* is a worthy successor to *Monty Mole* and I'm sure many people will like it enormously. Overall, it offers a good challenge to games players of all sorts and it's worth having in your Christmas stocking.'

● 'Potty Pigeon is a novel but simple idea, just collecting worms. It couldn't be easier could it, except for avoiding the odd helicopter, hawks, triffids and cars - even frogs are dangerous, but then again, it's all in the every day life of Potty the pigeon. Sounds thrilling, well I can assure you it gets very tiresome, repetitive and



strategic element in determining the best way to get the goodies and escape. I found it both playable and addictive. The men, although smooth, moved nicely, running, jumping, climbing and swinging in true commando style. An edit and save facility is provided so you can invent your own situations when you are fed up with the 150 screens already there.'

● 'A game to be dismissed, is a probable first thought on seeing Lode Runner, because the graphics look small and old fashioned. But don't be misled. A closer examination reveals that the one character-sized men are beautifully animated and extremely characterful as well. This is another of those 'modern' arcade oldies given a new lease of life with clever thinking, which piles incident on top of incident until a completely new game emerges from it. It's simple game in playing concept, but difficult and challenging in execution. Fun and highly addictive, especially with so many

screens to play, Lode Runner is a great game. Get it!'

● 'First impressions of this game is that it is going to be a crummy platform game, because the size of the characters is tiny. One then realises that each individual character, though only 8 pixels high, is quite detailed and fairly well animated, quite neat indeed. Screen layout is big, to say the least, mind you, it is an assault course. Usage of the screen space is excellent. While playing the game, it becomes apparent that collecting gold ingots isn't as easy as it seems. A considerable amount of forward planning is needed, especially on the higher screens when there seem to be hundreds of storm troopers after you - amazing! There is something, I don't quite know what it is, that attracted me to this game and I think it will have a long lasting appeal. Whilst you progress through the many screens, a useful item (known as spare lives) is incremented with every screen you clear, so that on level 5 you have 9 lives, and

I can assure you, you really do need 9 lives. A much more complex game than first meets the eye, but usually these are the types that attract people into buying them, because they will have such a long lasting appeal. Another original idea that uses some previously tested graphics, ie. platforms.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, preset are: Q/Z up/down, I/P left/right, N to dig holes
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair 2

Keyboard play: highly responsive

Use of colour: simple on the whole, but very good

Graphics: small, mean as hell and well animated

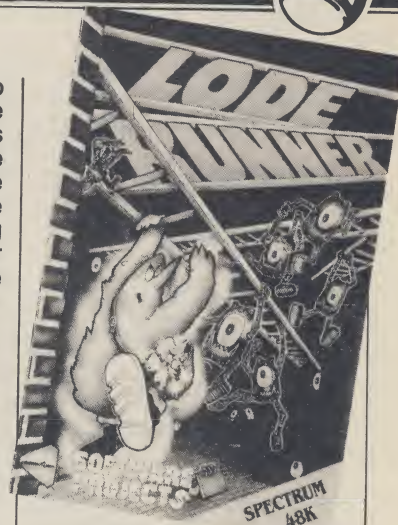
Sound: not much, but doesn't spoil the game

Skill levels: 1, but it seems to get more difficult as you go along

Lives: 4 to kick off with

Screens: 150

Special features: you can design your own screens via



the editor and save them to tape

General rating: a very good game, with plenty of playability and addictive qualities.

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	68%
Playability	83%
Getting started	84%
Addictive qualities	80%
Value for money	87%
Overall	81%



that there is a terrible amount actually moving and going on to keep you interested. They say it's the early bird that gets the worm, but sometimes it's the early bird that gets the bullet - in the back.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, P/L up/down, N to SYM SHIFT to fire

Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2

Keyboard play: responsive, well laid out

Use of colour: good

Graphics: quite good, smooth and detailed

Sound: above average

Skill levels: 1

Lives: 3

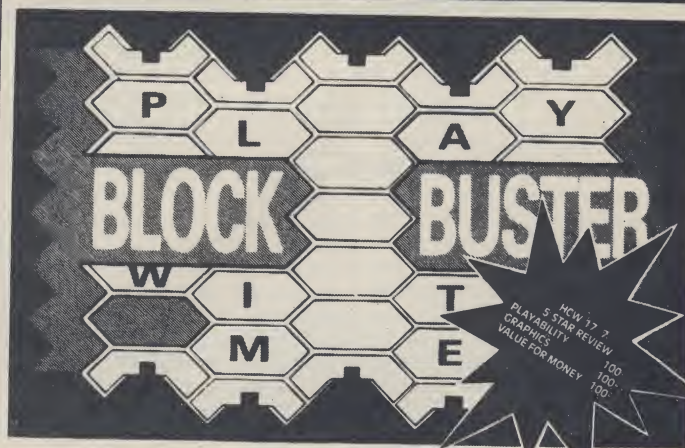
Screens: 11

General rating: good, but varied opinions from reviewers.

Use of computer	72%
Graphics	77%
Playability	69%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	63%
Value for money	63%
Overall	70%

boring, and quite often frustrating. Frustrating for the simple fact that for no reason whatsoever, every now and again, you lose your hard-earned worm. Graphics are quite pretty, colourful and detailed, but I can't really say

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THERBO

Producer: Arcade Software

Memory required: 48K

Retail price: £5.95

Language: machine code

Author: Bruce Rutherford

Therbo (an alternative to war) is the name of a game, as is 'cricket' or 'football'. In fact 'Therbo' stands for *thermal ballistic object* with which the game is played, as a football is used in soccer. Consequently *Therbo* can claim to be the first computer simulation of a fantasy game – although being a fictional game, this does not look anything like a simulation in normal terms, but is in fact a genuine arcade oddity.

The scenario is set in the latter part of the 21st century, when America and Russia initially proposed the concept and finalised the rules governing the playing of the game. It was agreed that the winners of the conflict gain control of the opponent's land and that the game should be played, for safety reasons, on the moon. Whilst the track was cut on the lunar surface, the design of the weapons was perfected.

Your opponent is the computer, and is designated as the home team. The *Therbo* track in some senses resembles one of those huge particle accelerators. The screen display looks down from on top and shows both walls of the track, scrolling left or right (depending on which team has control of the *therbo*) from the start point to the goal mouth. The *therbo* basically travels down the centre of the track and to gain control of it, it must be knocked into 'touch', or the side walls of the track. This is done by firing thrusters. These are situated at regular intervals along the sides of the track and they fire a bolt diagonally upwards or downwards. When a bolt hits the *therbo*, it knocks it one nudge in the direction of fire. Each team has control of its own thrusters. The team in possession of the *therbo* may use their thrusters to keep the *therbo* in play, while the opponents use theirs to knock it out of play.

Another weapon is the *Mesmo*, which destroys the *therbo* outright, but this function may only be used three times in any game. THERE ARE ALSO



Polarity Missiles, which home in on the *therbo* and will destroy it after a set period of time. But it is possible for the *therbo* to fire charges at the missiles, either negative or positive, and if you guess the polarity of the missile and send out a charge of the opposite polarity, then the missile will be destroyed.

There are two stages to each game. In the first stage the team controlling the *therbo* also have a tank which travels along with the *therbo*. The tank is used to destroy shapes that move across the screen by firing at them. The tank uses up fuel, but there is a large circular refuelling ship which moves randomly about the screen. Running the tank over it will replenish fuel. In the second stage it is a straight run for the goal and everything except the *therbo* disappears. But the goal will be disallowed if your tank has not destroyed a set amount of shapes thus scoring the necessary points to enter the second stage.

The game lasts for nine minutes initially, but if you want more time you can select an extra three minutes once, and only within the last three minutes of the game.

CRITICISM

● 'Therbo (no I haven't caught a cold), is the first thing I've seen from Arcade for some time. AT FIRST I thought it was just a confusing mixed up sort

of game. After a lot of playing I proved myself very wrong indeed. Galactic football best describes it, with you trying to protect the ball, sorry, thermal ballistic object, and score. This alternative to war is a refreshingly original game which becomes addictive after practice. The graphics are smooth and 'practical', any more complex and they may have swamped this game. If you gave it a quick play in the shops you would probably leave it there; it is the sort of game that grows on you as your skills improve – a factor which is reflected in my 'getting started' rating.

● 'This game took me ages to get the hang of. It is very difficult to grasp the ideal objectives. The instructions do try to make everything clear but just don't really cope with it all. The graphics are clear and move very quickly about the screen. Colour is well used with no apparent attribute problems, with the sound being mainly spot effects, but at least meaningful ones. I think *Therbo* may appeal to quite a few people and although it is difficult to grasp the idea initially, it is well worth the effort. A good game that lacks a little for me in addictive qualities – strange and different.'

● 'I suppose if you had to describe how to play cricket or football in about 500 words to people who had never heard of either game, you would also have difficulty getting all the subtleties across. A pity, because many people might put *Therbo* down before giving it a chance. It is a simple idea that is rich in playability once the objectives have been thoroughly understood. There are a

daunting number of keys to play with, but not all of them are needed at the same time. The first stage of each goal run is quite challenging with a four directional tank to control and fire from, keeping an eye on the targets, the ast depleted fuel supply and the essential fuel tanker (which darts about all over the place) and watching out that the computer doesn't knock your *therbo* out of play while all this is going on. The graphics are 'different' looking, effective and fast, and the result is an original, playable and ultimately addictive game which I enjoyed and will come back to.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A tank up/down, O/P tank left/right and Ø to fire, W/S fires thrusters up/down, I fires polarity missiles, M for *Mesmo* destruct, and 1/2 fires positive/negative charge
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek

Keyboard play: a lot of keys, but sensibly laid out and responsive

Use of colour: not a lot, but very well used

Graphics: smooth, fast and different

Sound: poor to fair, mostly spot effects

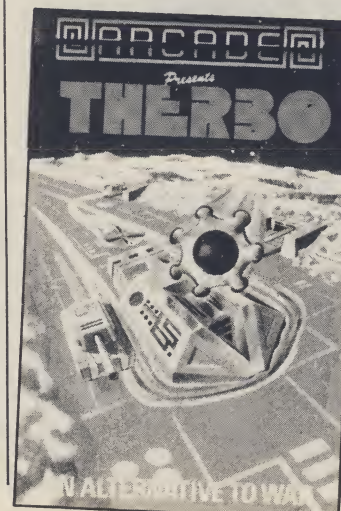
Skill levels: 3

Lives: N/A

Screens: scrolling

General rating: a good original game.

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	70%
Playability	79%
Getting started	58%
Addictive qualities	74%
Value for money	75%
Overall	71%





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PROGRAMMABLE
INTERFACE

ROMSLOT
INTERFACE II



QUICKSHOT
II

QUICKSHOT

PROGRAMMABLE INTERFACE

As the first fully hardware programmed joystick interface, this product has become well established over the past year and will accept ALL standard joysticks or trackballs, including Quickshot II with 'rapid fire', for use with ALL Spectrum or ZX81 software — not just those with a joystick option.

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- * Compatibility is guaranteed with ALL key reading techniques — machine code or BASIC.

* Several interfaces can be separately programmed and fitted to one computer for multiple player games.

Keyboard operation is totally unaffected by this interface, as with all AGF add-ons, and will never conflict with any other device fitted at the same time.

Twelve months guarantee, key programming information and a pack of Quick Reference Cards, to speed up setting of the clips, are supplied with full instructions.

INTERFACE II

The AGF Interface II represents the best low cost introduction to joystick control.

The 'AGF' control standard is now offered by over 100 games or utility programs for use with any joystick or trackball.

Any game which is controlled by the cursor movement keys (5,6,7,8) or has a Protek option is also compatible with Interface II.

A rear connector allows other peripherals to be connected at the same time.

This product is available for either the Spectrum or ZX81, is supplied with full instructions, a 12 month guarantee, and a 12½% discount voucher against further AGF mail-order purchases.

ROMSLOT

The new AGF RomSlot is designed for anyone who already owns a programmable joystick interface, or prefers to use the keyboard to control games, and would like to add the facility of ROM cartridge software to their system.

RomSlot will accept the Sinclair range of instant loading games and will also be compatible with the new releases from Parker Software — exciting new games only to be available in ROM format.

This system allows instant play. Your computer memory size is not important and you will be able to play games that could ordinarily require more RAM.

RomSlot incorporates an extra feature called 'Restart'. This allows you to instantly *restart* the ROM game.

RomSlot is guaranteed for 12 months and has a full width expansion connector to accept joystick interfaces, speech units and printers etc.

QUICKSHOT

The Quickshot joystick is an excellent value game controller incorporating suction cups for sure-footed precision with a comfortably contoured handle offering a convenient top firing button as well as one on the base.

QUICKSHOT II

Quickshot II has improved styling with a trigger type firing button as well as the top firing action, with a broader base for greater suction stability.

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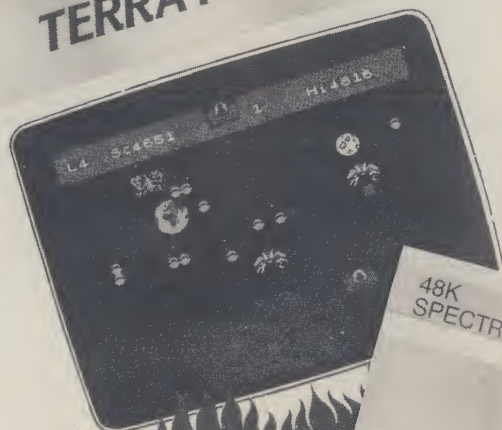
WAR GAME



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FIREBIRD

48K
SPECTRUM

EXODUS

FIREBIRD are offering a Microdrive Expansion Kit valued at £90 to the winner of this competition, and for the runners-up there are five complete sets of FIREBIRD software for the Spectrum. The titles include *Run Baby Run*, *Exodus*, *Viking Raiders*, *Terra Force*, *Menace*, *The Wild Bunch*, *Mr Freeze*, *Crazy Caverns*, *Byte Bitten*, and the **CRASH SMASH Booty**. Ten games in all.

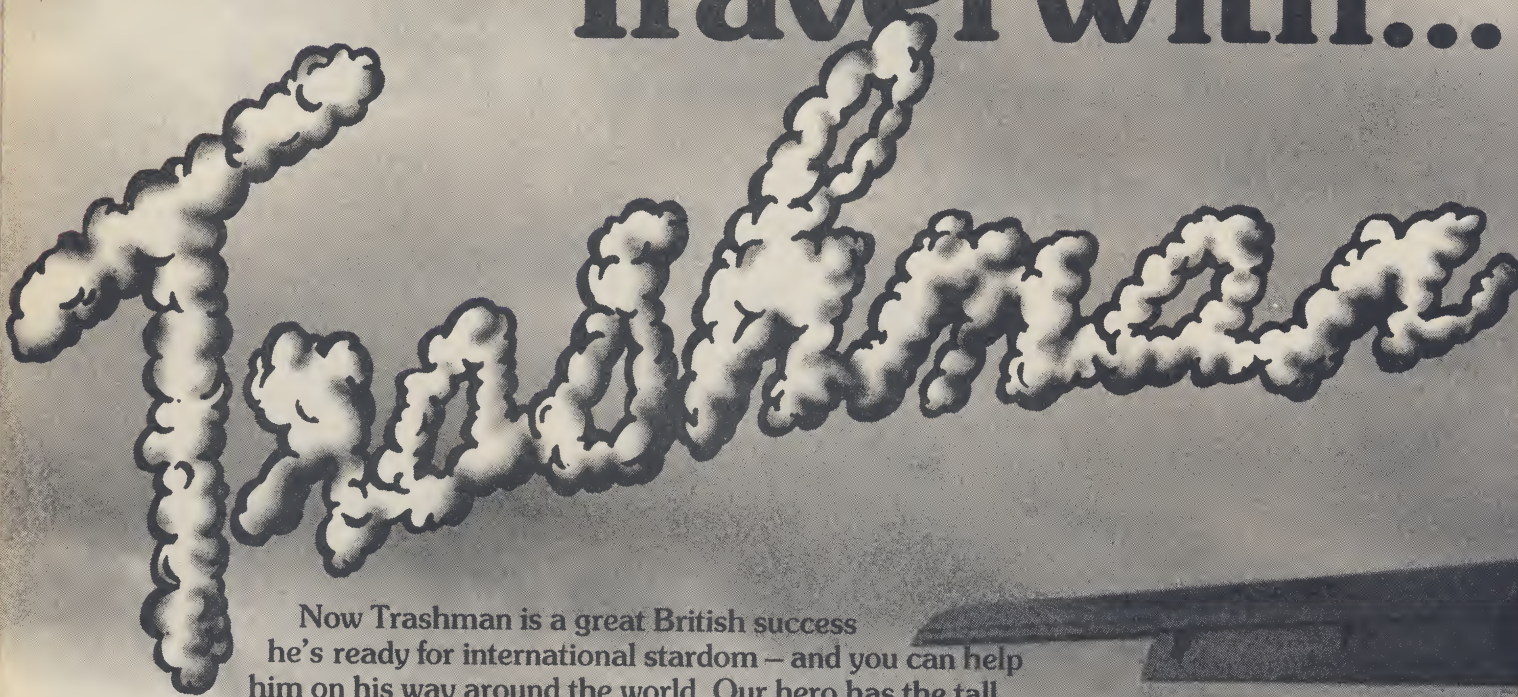
FROM FIREBIRD of software!

The collage features several software boxes for the Spectrum computer, each with a unique game screen and the Firebird logo. The titles and their details are:

- MR. FREEZE**: 48K SPECTRUM, KEYBOARD or KEMPSTON JOYSTICK. Screen shows a maze-like level with a score of 000000.
- RUN BABY RUN**: 16K or 48K SPECTRUM. COP CHASE AND SHOOT OUT. Screen shows a maze with a score of 000000.
- BOOTY**: 48K SPECTRUM, KEYBOARD or KEMPSTON JOYSTICK. Screen shows a treasure map with a score of 000000.
- THE WILD BUNCH**: 48K SPECTRUM. WILD WEST ADVENTURE. Screen shows a western town with a score of 000000.
- MENACE**: 16K or 48K SPECTRUM, KEYBOARD or KEMPSTON JOYSTICK. CLASSROOM ANTICS. Screen shows a grid of icons with a score of 000000.
- ODUS**: KEYBOARD or JOYSTICK. Screen shows a game with a score of 000000.

To be amongst the winners all you have to do is construct a humorous sentence or short paragraph of no more than 100 words along the lines of the star letter in this month's CRASH FORUM, incorporating all the 10 titles from the FIREBIRD range. CRASH will select the most amusing and distribute the prizes accordingly. Send your entries to: FIREBIRD COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB to arrive no later than the first post January 18 1985. Entries must include your name and address, don't forget!

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Of course, your skill can help our hilarious hero to complete the necessary litter collection at every location, so he can earn the money to fly on to the next country in his round the world quest. And as he visits every continent on Earth in search of rubbish you can share every fun filled, thrill packed second with him.

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VULCAN, who have been distributing amongst other things the **SPECTRAVIDEO QUICKSHOT 1** and **QUICKSHOT 2**, have now released the **GUNSHOT** joystick, which seems to be a synthesis between the two **QUICKSHOTS**. The marked difference lies in the cream and grey colour of the unit, which is either to distinguish it from the other two offerings or to give it a MSX or Commodore family resemblance. Eenie, meenie, minie mo, which one to choose from?



GUNLAW—THE GREATEST GUNSHOT IN THE WEST

CONSTRUCTION

GUNSHOT seems at first to come out of the same moulds as the **QUICKSHOT 1**, but there are quite a few differences. On the inside can be found the usual star contact arrangement which is acti-

vated by the plastic actuator ring integral to the plastic shaft. A marked difference lies in the fact that the ring is not made to flex as usual with this type of design, so a more solid feel should be noted on actuation. The plastic shaft is suspended by a spherical support in the

top moulding and by a stiff spring protruding from the lever shaft which acts as a flexible bearing shaft, all very similar to the **QUICKSHOT 2**. The common star makes contact with four nickel-plated screw-heads, which are mounted on turrets and hold the solder tags

fitted to the wire ends of the cable. The lever handle incorporates a moulded grip and looks like an inverted **QUICKSHOT 1** lever. A round thumb-activated fire button is positioned in such a way that the palm of the hand comes to rest on the joystick enclosure, stabilising the joystick for one-hand operation. A further round fire button is available at 10 o'clock in the main body of the unit and is for right-handers only. Both fire buttons actuate dome switches mounted on small pcb's. The body-mounted fire button pcb has provision for an **AUTOFIRE** option, but the review model (**CL-123**) did not have this feature and the switch opening is covered by the manufacturer's label. The cable is the usual unit incorporating an integrally molded D connector (**ATARI** compatible pin-out) and retaining grommet. Four large suction cups provide stability for one hand operation (provided there are no crumbs on the table!).

IN ACTION

The stick action is what one has come to expect with this type of construction. There is a fairly short and loose travel with poor centering action, but this allows on the other hand for pretty fast 'edging' on some games. With the combination of short throw and poor centering it is quite easy to do diagonal moves by mistake. The **GUNSHOT** isn't ideal for handheld use due to its great width but it comes into its own when 'suctioned' to the table. The unit is solidly constructed and withstands the usual vandalism when playing **DECATHLON** type games.

CONCLUSION

GUNSHOT fits into the lowest price category of joysticks and feels like an improved and certainly more rugged version of the **QUICKSHOT 1** joystick.

It does not have the trigger fire action of the **QUICKSHOT 2** and obviously does not include the **AUTOFIRE** facility as standard.

The familiarity of the design is apparent and given the kind of technique used the quality of action is pretty much the same compared to its competition. At £7.95 this is obviously a good first buy.

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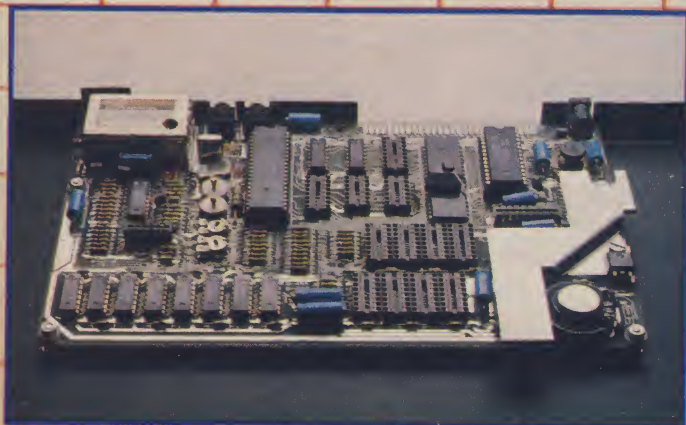


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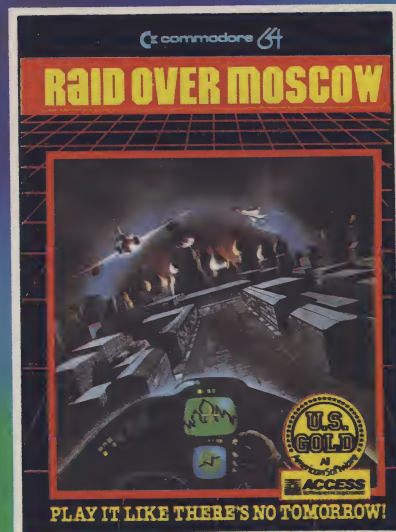
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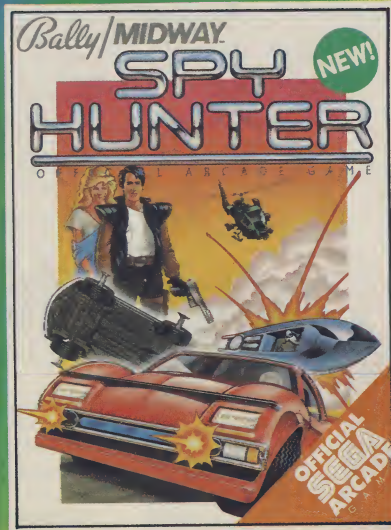
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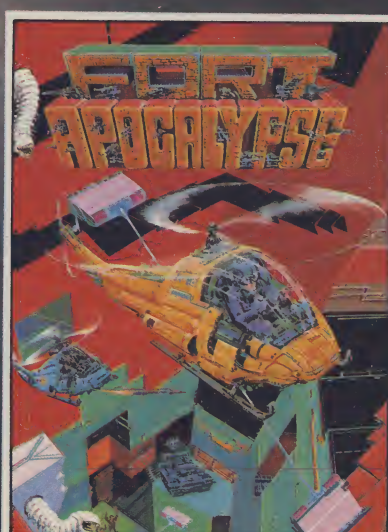


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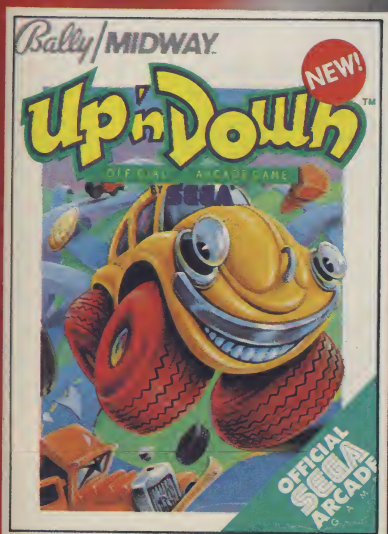


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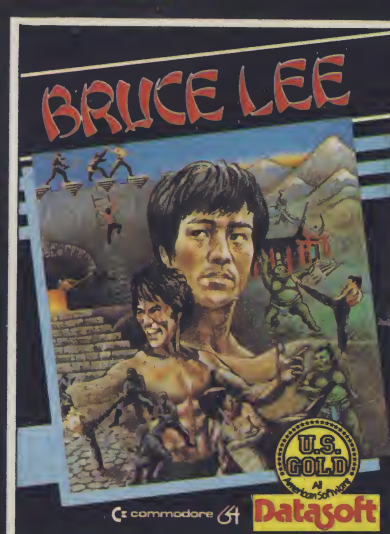
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WIN A

STARSTRIKE

FROM REALTIME

AND PLUNGE INTO THE TRENCH OF DEATH

100 STARSTRIKES MUST BE WON!!

Starstrike by **Realtime** was a CRASH Smash in the December issue. It follows in the wake of their highly popular Tank Duel and is an exciting 3D game set in space. The graphics are colourful (unusual in wire frame games) and convincing. This is perhaps the closest yet that micro games have come to imitating the classic cinema offering Star Wars.

The game involves you in firing twin lasers from your space craft at attacking aliens who hurl plasma bolts at you. There are three different screens with numerous levels of difficulty in space, on the surface of the battle star and down in the 'equatorial trench', which contains a protective force field through which you have to fly to reach the next level of play. Once through it, you are ejected once more into space and the battle star explodes behind you.

'A pleasing and high-performance game,' said the CRASH review.

CRASH has 100 copies of **STARSTRIKE** by **Realtime** (retail price £5.95) to give away. If you would like a copy of the game, all you have to do is to answer the following five questions on the theme of space and send in your answers on a postcard (or the back of a sealed envelope) to:
STARSTRIKE COMPETITION,
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10,
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB
to arrive no later than the first post
January 18 1985.



OF DEATH!!

STARSTRIKE COMPETITION

1. Was the first man to set foot on the moon A) Fred Nimblitz, B) Buzz Aldrin, C) Neil Armstrong, D) Yuri Gagarin?
2. Which is the largest planet in the Solar System? Is it A) Mercury, B) Saturn, C) Uranus, D) Jupiter?
3. Which country first sent a man into space? Was it A) China, B) The U. S. A., C) Britain, D) The U. S. S. R. ?
4. A dog has orbited the earth in a spacecraft. Is this statement TRUE or FALSE?
5. What is the name given to a grouping of stars which appear to make up the shapes of mythical characters? Is it A) QUASAR, B) SPRINKLE C) CONSTELLATION D) CELESTIAL?

THE GREAT SPACE





RACE

MOVI
SOFT 2

READY, STEADY GO!!

KEVIN FOSTER TALKS
TO MIKE ANDEREISZ
OF ROMIK

Romik are back – that's the message for Spectrum owners everywhere. The Slough-based software company, whose headquarters are a dingy converted warehouse on an industrial estate, have recently begun producing games for the Spectrum again after a dry spell of almost two years. During that time they were not idle: development of the Commodore 64 and Amstrad computers, and the Touchmaster graphic pad are just a few of the projects undertaken by this ambitious young company. As an indication of their growing stature, Thorn EMI recently agreed to handle Romik's distribution network – a not inconsiderable scoop for a software house.

Romik came into existence in the middle of 1982, founded by two ex-members of Rabbit, **Mike Barton** and **Steve Clark**. With a fiercely independent spirit, the company survived mainly on freelance commission work. Games to their credit for the Spectrum 48K include *3D Monster Chase*, *Shark Attack*, *Colour Clash* and *Spectra Smash*. They now possess a full-time programming team for the first time, and the indications from Romik's Publicity Manager **Mike Anderiesz** are that the company is all set to go. The emphasis is on making 1985 their year, using the Spectrum as a launching pad.

The first and most obvious question is why were Romik out of the Spectrum market for so long?

In the first instance, ours was a conscious decision to leave the Spectrum market. We felt that it was in a very healthy position indeed and was producing software of a very high standard. It didn't really need another software house. The Commodore market, however, did, and that's why we went there. We felt that the Commodore was lacking in imaginative, high quality software. Basically what Romik were looking for was somewhere to make an impact, and we found in the Commodore our best opportunity.

You believe then that the Spectrum market is now in a position where it's ripe for the picking?

Yes, in my opinion the Spectrum gets a superior quantity of advanced software.

Exactly when will Romik be releasing its new range of software for the Spectrum?

In the Spring of 1985. If they are

successful then there will be more games to follow. It depends on the reaction they receive from the market. Obviously, if the games-buying public are impressed by them we will know that the market is ready for more.

How will Romik games differ from all the other games that are currently available to the home computer owner? We are trying hard to take the computer game away from the arcade clone – the predictable 3D style, etc. Our games will be much more to do with role-playing, multi-player, arcade fantasies. But at the same time they will still be a lot of fun to play. Romik games will also be accurate, with less ferocious big-claims.

What do you mean by that last statement?

Well, look how many products claim to have the best 3D graphics, or title themselves 'epic arcade adventure games'. Megagames is a term that has

are wrong. We want to be sure that we deliver what we promise. Romik has a good name to live up to.

Will the games you release next year do justice to that reputation?

Yes, I think so. At the moment we are in the 3rd generation of software games. The 1st generation was typified by games such as *Pac Man*, the 2nd by *Time Gate* (for Quicksilver), and the 3rd by *Manic Miner*, which started a whole stream of amusing and imaginative games. Despite all the promises and all the claims, we're still in that 3rd generation today. Romik intend to be the first company to bring out 4th generation games, and these will be a considerable extension. I can tell you now that they will be something very special for the Spectrum owner. And while we are softening up the market, our in-house team will be developing the 5th generation of games for most of the major microcomputers. These will be released



been, blown out of all proportion. I'm personally very worried by the amount of misrepresentation that goes on in the advertising and packaging of cassettes. I don't think this is a conscious effort to mislead people, more of a bad habit that packagers and producers seem to have fallen into. When games make these sort of claims for themselves and then fail to live up to them, they are letting standards down quite drastically.

What do you think will be the likely outcome of all this?

I think the market is heading for a few unpleasant surprises. Come next year, for example, when the Christmas boom has died, home computer owners will suddenly find that they need to be a lot more discerning about the games they buy. And advertisers will have to learn to be a lot more particular about the terms they use to describe games. Frankly I'm surprised that the advertising standards authority hasn't stepped in sooner. All I'm saying is that people are going to be disappointed because some of the things they have been promised will simply not be delivered.

How does Romik intend to avoid the pitfall of misrepresenting games?

Romik will tell the truth about their games. We will be as objective as possible and expect to be crucified if we

in the Autumn of 1985, preceeded by a big advertising campaign.

You talk of a 4th and now a 5th generation of games. Isn't there the danger that people will see this as an example of the sort of cheap publicity stunt that you criticised earlier?

Yes, there is, but I hope no one sees this as a cheap publicity stunt. We have the expertise now to produce the sort of games I've mentioned, and we're not confined by the sort of commercial demands that hamper other software houses. Nor are we under any pressure to release games, simply because we're not totally reliant on them for our survival. We've survived this far to date while other companies have gone under, by having a diverse range of activities to be involved in – consumer accounts, development of the Amstrad, and several other business projects that should see us well into next year. It's a very restricted market and most software houses are milking it dry, but Romik don't need to do that.

What then is your overall New Year message?

We want to tell Spectrum owners that we haven't forgotten them and we will not let them down. We could afford to lie low until we were ready to release our products. Now that the time has come, I'm convinced it was well worth waiting for.

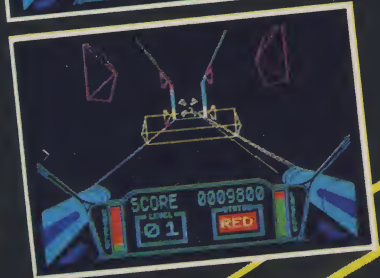
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THE KE TRILOG



CRASH has teamed up with **INCENTIVE SOFTWARE** to offer you the chance of winning a copy of their presentation gift pack *The Ket Trilogy* (retail price £12.95). Fifty lucky winners will receive the package — containing *Mountains of Ket*, *Temple of Vran* and *The Final Mission* — as a late filler in their stockings this Christmas.

The *Ket Trilogy* is an adventure classic for the Spectrum 48K, with the player attempting to liberate Ket from Vran and his evil entourage. As a bonus to the first person to fulfill the quest and free Ket, Incentive will duly bestow upon him or her the grand title of 'Britain's Best Adventurer' and offer them a video cassette recorder of their choice (to the value of £400).

So drag yourself away from the telly programmes this Christmas and get your thinking caps on, quick! All you have to do to win a copy of *The Ket Trilogy* is to study the three titles individually and using the letters in each title, make up 50 different words of three letters or more from each of them.

At CRASH we have managed to get at least 70 words from each title, so it shouldn't be too difficult. If we can do it, so can you!

Write your words (150 in all) down on a piece of paper and send them in to **INCENTIVE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than first post January 18, 1984.

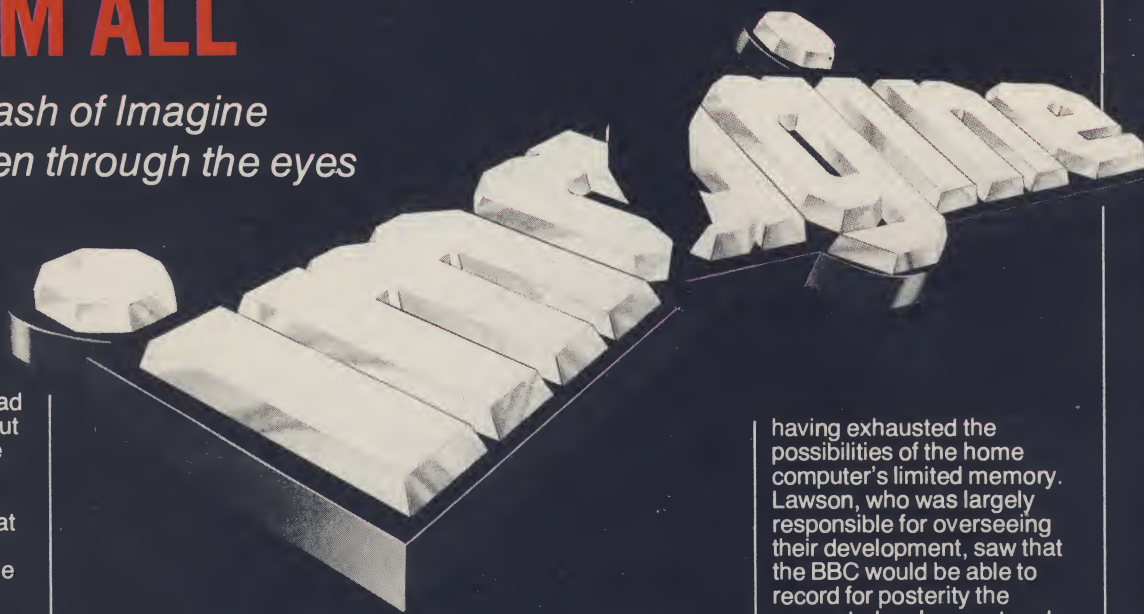
Don't forget — the titles are:

**MOUNTAINS OF KET
TEMPLE OF VRAN
THE FINAL MISSION**

and you must make up 50 new words from each title. Please don't forget to put your name and address on the piece of paper you send in!!

THE BIGGEST COMMERCIAL BREAK OF THEM ALL

A look at the crash of Imagine Software as seen through the eyes of a film crew.



Depending on when you read this article, you may be about to see, have seen or maybe missed, a fascinating programme on BBC2 television (December 13th at 8.00pm) in the Commercial Breaks series about Imagine Software Limited. The Liverpool software giant crashed out during the summer after a life of a little over 18 months, during which time it produced more hype than any other software house before. The company appeared to bask in self-created publicity, much of which was very clever, and so it seems appropriate that its death should also have been as well recorded for posterity by the media it sought for its promotion, as had its successes in life. As things turned out, the BBC film crew got a rather different story to the one they had conceived, but much of the material shot for Commercial Breaks cannot appear in the finished programme, because it falls outside the scope of the series format.

Roger Kean spoke to BBC director **Paul Andersen** as he was busy putting the finishing touches to the programme.

GIVE US A BREAK

Early in the new year of 1984 BBC Television director **Paul Andersen**, who among other things was about to direct some of the programmes for the Commercial Breaks series, witnessed the enthusiasm surrounding some of the new generation of computer games that were beginning to appear in the shops, and appreciated that the emerging software houses were pioneering a new market. Commercial Breaks is a series which broadly examines the struggles of individuals and companies

who are trying to 'break' a new product into the market place. To Andersen the new computer game software 'moguls' seemed like a good subject for a programme and he began researching, looking for a suitable company to feature.

An obvious place to look was in computer magazines, and it rapidly became apparent that Imagine was a strong contender because of the spate of clever advertising that was then appearing which was designed for Imagine by **Stephen Blower** of Studio Sting, an offshoot company of Imagine, coupled with the fact that Andersen, like so many people in Britain, was reading the national press publicity about Imagine's teenage programmer **Eugene Evans**, who was said to be earning £35,000 a year and could afford a fabulously expensive car when he was still too young to be able to drive it. There was obviously a story here for Commercial Breaks.

The next step was to approach Imagine and ask the owners whether they would mind being featured. So Andersen travelled to Liverpool and spoke to the young bosses of the new company, **Mark Butler** and **David Lawson**. Lawson had written *Arcadia*, Imagine's biggest hit at the time, and Butler had sold it into shops starved of software over the 82 Christmas. At first they seemed a bit reluctant, and

Imagine's Operations Manager, **Bruce Everiss**, explained that there were too many things under wraps to allow in the prying eyes of television. On the other hand the publicity-eager Everiss must have been able to see the promotional capital that could be made out of having BBC TV hanging around for some weeks making a film about them. **Dave Lawson** saw another angle altogether, and to appreciate this it's worth remembering what put Liverpool on the map in the early sixties.

BIRTH OF AN INDUSTRY

The Beatles transformed British (and then world) pop music in the early sixties, and created a modern myth about Liverpool, their home city. Over the years Liverpool has come to see itself as a possibly undernourished and underprivileged city, but one bursting at the seams with imagination and guts. With the eighties something similar to the Beatles seemed to be happening, only in computer software this time, and **Dave Lawson** must have seen Imagine as being at its very centre. **Stephen Blower** says that, 'Lawson had some greater vision of what could be produced in software than anyone else I've ever met.'

At the time when **Paul Andersen** approached them, Imagine was working on the concept of the megagames,

having exhausted the possibilities of the home computer's limited memory. **Lawson**, who was largely responsible for overseeing their development, saw that the BBC would be able to record for posterity the concept, development and creative effort of a dedicated team in bringing these new super games out. In a way, the Imagine team, and especially the men who ran the company, would be seen to be ushering in a new Beatles era, but in software rather than in music. For the TV director the megagames also offered an essential linch pin on which to hang his programme. It all seemed ideal and, at the time neither party knew how dramatically different things would turn out.

When the BBC film crew went in to start shooting material for the programme they realised that Imagine made good visual material; huge, luxurious offices, acres of carpet, computer terminals by the ton load, lots of young programmers, secretaries in abundance, young 'gophers' acting as runners for the management and a company garage packed with a fleet of Ferrari Boxers, BMWs for the lesser executives and the famous **Mark Butler** custom hand-built Harris motorbike. At the time Imagine was employing 103 members of staff. Andersen had a funny feeling that it all looked too good to be true – and it was.

He noted that beneath the energy and bustle there were inconsistencies. Principal of these was an apparent split in the senior management which meant factions were working against each other. But the first noted discrepancy in the outward bravado was that **Eugene Evans** had obviously never received anything like the £35,000 a year quoted in the PR story. But what seemed more surprising to

Andersen, was that Evans had never really written any programs either – certainly nothing that Imagine cared to publish. This might not have surprised some of his contemporary Liverpoolian programmers who were working for other software houses, however, who knew much better.

THE GROWING SPLIT

Eugene Evans, like Mark Butler had worked at Microdigital, one of the first ever British computer stores, situated in Liverpool. Bruce Everiss was also associated with Microdigital, and so were many of the programmers who were later to become the bedrock of the Liverpool software business. They all knew each other pretty well. It was the sort of in-bred atmosphere which leads to personality clashes, and soon enough the BBC team began to see evidence of them.

The disparity between the publicity hype and the reality became increasingly apparent during the summer months. Central to the problems was the fact that both Mark Butler and Dave Lawson had catapulted to fame and fortune within a few months. They would have been super-human if they had not come to believe a little in their own publicity and both in their different ways appear to have failed in coping with the fortune. Mark Butler's background after leaving Microdigital was as Sales Manager for **Bug-Byte** where Lawson also worked as a programmer. They both left to set up Imagine in a small front room after several disagreements with the Bug-Byte management. The money that sales of *Arcadia* made over the Christmas of 82, was reinvested in bigger premises, personnel and in new programs, which also sold well. Naturally, the two young moguls needed staff and management to help administrate the in-pouring fortune, a classic situation which encourages the development of court chamberlains. One of the first such was Bruce Everiss, who seems to have naturally attached himself more to Mark than to Dave. Everiss was responsible for the day to day running of the company, but the responsibility for financial control and a directorship was put in the hands of **Ian Hetherington**.

Hetherington attached

himself to Lawson. The factions had begun.

One of Mark's hobbies is fast motorbikes. He created the Imagine racing team and himself rode on the track. In fact Paul Andersen and the BBC crew were at the Isle of Man TT races in June filming at a time when Imagine was already in serious trouble and teetering on the brink of a crash. Mark did suffer a crash. Ironically, he was driven to the dismemberment of his empire swathed in bandages.

According to Andersen (a view backed up by many other observers), the two bosses thought that because of their success in the field of games production, it meant they could handle all sorts of other businesses as well. Almost at the outset they founded Studio Sting, together with Stephen Blower, the designer whose art work helped sell the company's image and which adorned Imagine covers. Studio Sting was to act as a design centre and Advertising Agency for Imagine, which meant the company would be entitled to an discount on ad space booked in magazines. In return Stephen Blower received a 10% share of *Imagine* (which wasn't worth all too much when the share was gladly handed over). Within a few months this situation had changed and the 10% was worth a lot on paper. The triad of Butler, Lawson and Hetherington wanted things rationalised – ie. they wanted the 10% back. There are many rumours attached to the goings on at this time, in-fighting appears to have been rife, but whatever actually took place, the outcome was that Studio Sting was left holding huge magazine advertising debts (which have remained unpaid) but Stephen held onto his 10%, although he lost any executive post within Imagine. He therefore lost control over his own destiny when management decisions led to its downfall, and is still undergoing legal wrangles between himself and Butler/Lawson as to his financial responsibilities in the matter of Imagine's vast debt.

In a telephone conversation with CRASH's Kevin Foster, Blower said, 'Imagine tried to accuse me of certain things that I didn't do. For instance, they said I was detrimental to the company's image and that I was booking advertising space that wasn't wanted. I was accused of stealing, or misappropriating £10,000, and my wife was accused of being incapable of keeping the books at Studio Sting. All this



Stephen Blower – still stuck with some of the Imagine debt – is now a director of Ocean Software.

was later disproved in court.'

He went on to say, 'They were obviously after my 10. Imagine owed Studio Sting £89,000, so the way I see it is that they attempted to brush that debt under the carpet. The allegations were just an attempt to condone their own actions. I was probably the only one at Imagine who stuck to what he was best at doing.'

THE MEGAGAMES

Late in 83 Imagine had set up a deal to produce games for publishers Marshall Cavendish which may have been worth as much as £11 million to Imagine. Early in 84 the contracts were signed, but even before Andersen had received the co-operation of Imagine to start shooting there were signs that all was not well with the deal. By the time the BBC crew was installed it was clear that things were going badly wrong. The megagames had intervened. Dave Lawson who, according to Bruce Everiss, always insisted that the programmers be left strictly alone, free to create without management interference, wanted to concentrate on the development of the megagames. Marshall Cavendish became disenchanted by the lack of progress on their games. They had already paid out a lot of money and seem to have been unhappy with the quality of what was ready. They pulled out and wanted their money

back. But Imagine had taken on more people to cope, programmers, artists, musicians, gophers. None of these was laid off. The overheads went up alarmingly.

Meanwhile the megagames were not progressing as well as it was originally hoped they would. Andersen noted that John Gibson was working hard at *Bandersnatch* with Ian Weatherburn, but *Psychapse* was nowhere, nothing more than a paper idea. Yet at this stage the artist Roger Dean (famous for his record album sleeves and mythological books) had already designed the boxes and the ads which were beginning to appear. Dean reputedly asked for £6,000 for this job, and Andersen thought he was 'smart enough' to have demanded it up front.

An important problem with the megagames was that they required a hardware add-on which was to be made in the East. To get the price right, enormous quantities would have to be manufactured. Imagine did not possess the money any more, and anyway could not have sensibly decided how many games would eventually sell. There was indecision all round. Bruce Everiss was to say later, 'One option that we have is to sell the company as a whole to Sinclair Research, and I've been speaking to Sinclair Research, and they're not interested. They're saying that they want to keep programming of that nature outside their company.'

It transpired that Sinclair

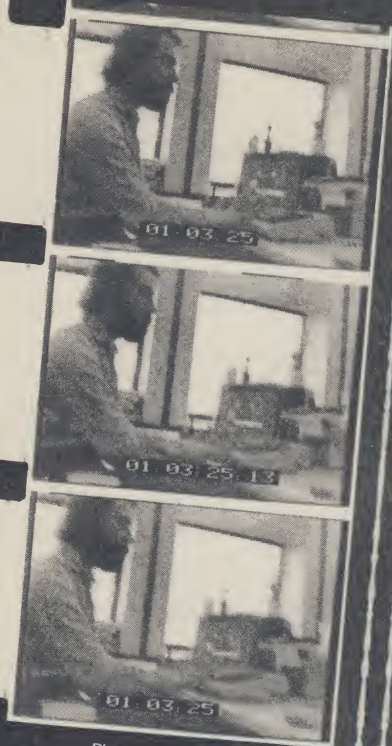


Photo courtesy of the BBC

Programmer John Gibson at work on the megagame BANDERSNATCH, deep in the Imagine 'top security' area.

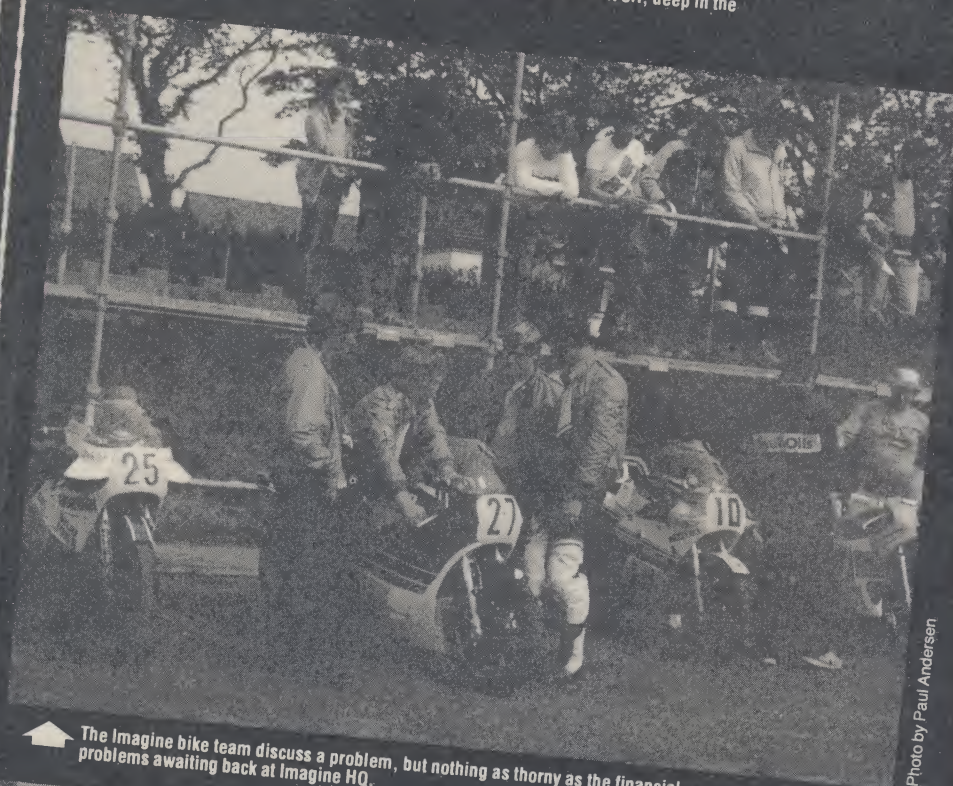
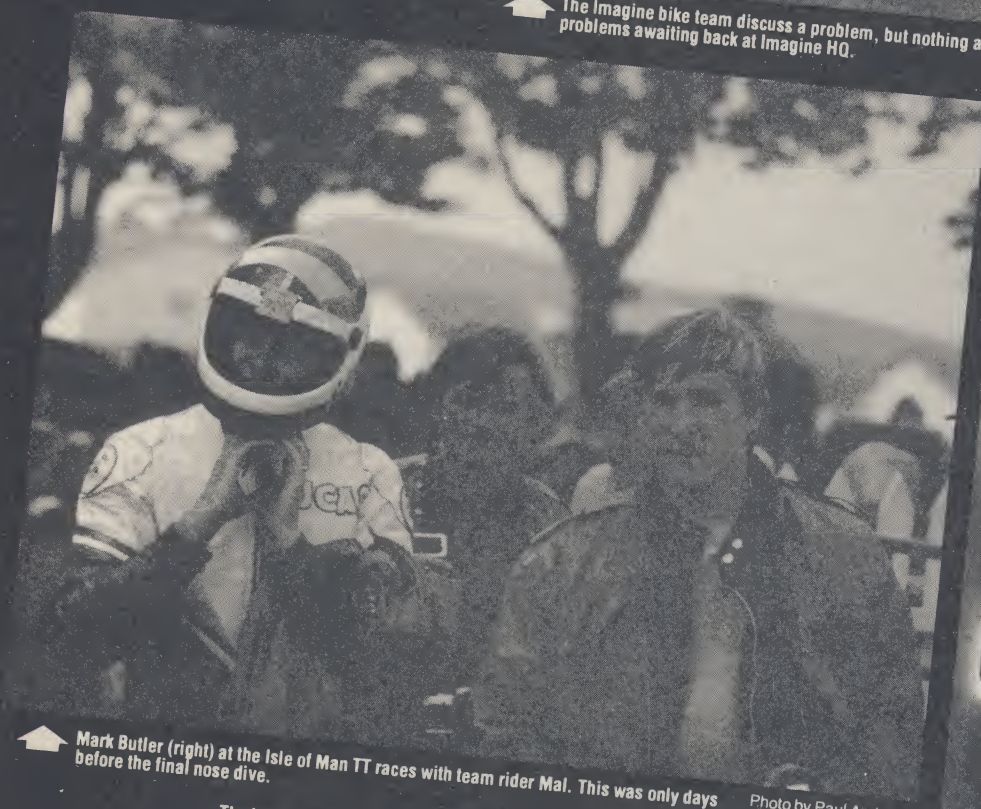


Photo by Paul Andersen

The Imagine bike team discuss a problem, but nothing as thorny as the financial problems awaiting back at Imagine HQ.



Mark Butler (right) at the Isle of Man TT races with team rider Mal. This was only days before the final nose dive.

Photo by Paul Andersen

The Imagine top management team. Around the table from left to right, Bruce Everiss, Ian Hetherington, Dave Lawson, Mike Crofton (Advertising Manager) and Mark Butler.



Photo courtesy of the BBC

Research was only interested in buying finished product and that the megagames would have to be designed to work on the micro-drive, because they would not undertake the production of masses of hardware add-ons. In the event Sinclair Research did buy an option on *Bandersnatch* for the QL computer to go on micro-drive.

Another interesting rumour

that Paul Andersen's film team were able to verify, was what occurred over the Christmas period of 83. In 1982 there had been a software shortage in the shops. 1983 was to be a boom time, and Imagine decided on a clever ploy to foil the duplication of their rivals' tapes. Ahead of time they booked the entire duplicating capacity of Kiltale, one of the

biggest duplicators for the software business. The idea, obviously, was to make it impossible for other major companies to get enough tapes duplicated for the Christmas rush. On paper it looked like an elegant piece of industrial sabotage. In practice it backfired. Imagine ended up hiring a warehouse

for the storage of the hundreds of thousands of cassettes that they ended up with. After Christmas the bottom fell out of the market, and there was no way they could shift the games. This was a principal reason behind the strange move to lower the price of Imagine software. It

also backfired because they had flooded the shops with non-selling tapes, and then expected everyone to like the fact that the tapes would have to be sold at a price lower than the wholesale price the shopkeepers had bought the tapes in for in the first place.

THE SCRIPT CHANGES

So in the middle of shooting a TV programme about a company that was going places fast, Paul Andersen found himself filming one with a huge staff it no longer needed nor could afford, sitting on a vast stock of product it could not sell, with programmers left to their own devices much of the time and producing games that were increasingly unplayable and usually released with bugs still in them (remember *Stonkers*), run by a management team that was beginning to fall apart at the seams. Andersen recalls filming a meeting where the bosses sat around discussing how large the megagame boxes should be, whether they should be huge to entice punters to fork out £30 to £40, or whether the large size would put buyers off on the grounds that everyone knows model kit boxes are usually full of air. And this at a time when their empire was literally falling apart through lack of money and mounting debts. Lawson was buried in his megagames, Butler was acting out the role of playboy in his Ferrari and at the bike tracks. Everiss was trying to keep the offices running, while the rest of the 'top management team' struggled to cope with the increasing bitterness that was developing between the triad at the top. Some of the effects of what was happening were apparent to outsiders as well. I recall visiting Imagine for a meeting with Dave Lawson and Bruce Everiss sometime in late April. Lawson never turned up and Mark Butler appeared for a few moments, having just popped into the building to pick up some petty cash. It seemed a bit odd. The resulting article which appeared in CRASH naturally quoted Everiss the most. When the issue was published Butler rang me to complain that the emphasis was wrong – it made it sound like Everiss ran the company, he told me, when in fact he and Dave were still in charge.

As early as 16th April 1984, a petition was presented to the High Court by Cornhill

Publications Ltd., to have Imagine Software Ltd. wound-up for non-payment of debts. At the time of writing I have been unable to establish what these debts were, or how they were incurred. The matter was 'heard' on the 11th June, three or four days before the TT races. On Monday 9th July at the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) a further petition to wind-up Imagine on behalf of VNU Business Press (publishers of Personal Computer Games among others) went unopposed. Imagine was finished.

But what was happening back in Liverpool? The BBC crew were filming right up to the last moment, and witnessed the apathy and confusion that attended the last days. A memorable scene is the man from Kiltale the duplicators, walking up and down Imagine's offices trying to get to see either Butler, Lawson or Hetherington, the only people who could pay him the £60,000 owed by Imagine, much of it for the mass duplication done over Christmas in an attempt to prevent other software houses having games ready. He was in despair. But Mark Butler was not available, and the Lawson/Hetherington faction had disappeared.

According to Bruce Everiss, they had already made their plans well beforehand, and events would appear to back him up. What he told Paul Andersen, is substantially the same as what he told me over the phone back in July. 'I'm not a signatory on the bank, or anything, but I've had a look at the financial records of the company and there has never been a VAT return (*Imagine had been running for 18 months and should therefore have made at least 6 VAT returns by law*), never a bank conciliation, never a creditor's ledger control account, never any budgeting, never any cash flow forecasting, no cost centres, not even an invoice authorisation procedure. Just no financial control at all.'

All these financial aspects were supposedly the responsibility of Ian Hetherington. Paul Andersen recalls that Hetherington was usually unapproachable during filming and had little if anything to say to the film crew.

Is it possible that Hetherington had already sussed out the true financial position of Imagine right at the start of his tenure? It would be odd if he hadn't, since the cracks were there even before Christmas 83. What must

surely have occurred to him is that Imagine was capable of making a lot of money, and that the megagames were going to make them all very rich. A lot of Imagine was now defunct and wasting money. Debts were getting to be astronomical, various attempts to raise money in the City had failed or been abandoned. If the company went, so would the investment in the megagames, so too would their personal finances.

Everiss again: 'Dave has become anxious about losing his big house in Coldy and about his kids at expensive schools and Ian has become greedy and wants to become a millionaire overnight. So Ian has presented this' Finchspeer plan to Dave. Dave, grasping at straws, has taken it on board – which means that only 20 people will be employed.'

THE RESCUE PLAN

Finchspeer. The name first hit the press after the Imagine collapse. Finchspeer was the new company founded by Dave Lawson and Ian Hetherington for what appears to be the express purpose of acquiring all the Imagine assets. As a result of canvassing opinion and currying favour with those programmers whom Lawson and Hetherington considered 'sympathetic' to them (rather than the Butler/Everiss faction), jobs were offered in the new company to approximately 20 people – in fact those needed to continue work on and complete the megagames.

At the time the Finchspeer documents were drawn up, very few people knew about the Lawson/Hetherington plans. It seems Mark Butler had no idea and Bruce Everiss certainly didn't. 'They didn't tell Mark about this until the very last minute when they let him in on a third of Finchspeer,' Everiss told Paul Andersen later. It seems incredible that the duo thought they could get away with transferring assets from a company part-owned by Butler, without his knowledge. Stephen Blower was also in the dark. Later, he was to be held jointly responsible in law for Imagine's debts. He told us, 'I'm still liable for the over draft, which was £112,000 at the last count. If it came to court I think I would have a good case against them, as has been shown last time I took them to court.' Blower

appears to have maintained that Butler and Lawson should have protected his interests better, and the Courts have agreed. Butler and Lawson were ordered to pay Blower back the £89,000, but failed to do so. At a later hearing the Judge said that he ought to send Butler and Lawson to jail for refusing a court order to pay, but they were let off on the grounds that in jail they would be unable to put matters right and that it was in the best interests of both parties if they were allowed to continue their present work to be enabled to pay Blower.

Although the Finchspeer arrangements were made in secrecy, it did not quite escape the notice of the BBC team, who actually filmed Dave Lawson signing a legal document relating to some aspect of Finchspeer. This shot appeared in the 'rough cut' of the programme (at the time of writing it is not known whether it remains), but because this deal was largely outside the scope of the programme, the shot is just there as visual background.

On a later occasion the film crew were also present when Dave Lawson's wife came into his office to get papers signed for a passport shortly before he left for America with Hetherington. With the winding-up orders going through the courts unopposed, Lawson and Butler prepared to disappear from the scene.

On the telephone, Hetherington told us, 'I didn't run away anywhere. I spent four weeks, day and night writing a business report. I was in America for fund-raising, and we were damn near successful, but we had to have our trip cut short because of the goings-on at Imagine.' He added, 'I'm sick to death of people insinuating that anything untoward happened at Imagine.'

In retrospect it seems incredible that they should leave the country at such a time, unless one supposes that they felt unable to face the imminent disaster. Protests that the trip was a realistic fund-raising exercise for Imagine seem undermined in the face of the writs going unopposed through the law courts before and during their trip. As soon as the two men had gone, numerous creditors, trying for weeks to get some reply to their demands for overdue payment, were stumped, because with Lawson and Hetherington gone, there was no one able to cope with the financial problems. It's

or three days later before the assembled staff and told them in a brief speech that it was over, that he hoped they would get paid what they were owed if it was possible, and that he would try to find alternative employment for as many as possible. During the period between Lawson and Heatherington vanishing and the bailiffs arriving, life in the Imagine HQ appears to have been as disorganised and dream-like as it was in Hitler's Berlin bunker. In reply to Paul Andersen's question about what had been happening, Everiss replied: 'Well, there was a whole pile of people just playing games there and they're hiding from the camera. If you go round the corner here, by the exit, you'll find there's a big pile of empty fire extinguishers because there's been fire extinguisher fights all week. That's been the main event.'

As far as the BBC crew could see, the staff were mostly sitting around, watching videos and waiting for the end. Everiss was left with trying to find jobs for about 60 staff, those left behind by the new Finchspeer crew, and in the end he felt morally obliged to resign. 'Dave and Ian, being too much of cowards to face up to me, have told Mark that they wouldn't want me here when they returned,' he said.

That was largely it for Imagine Software Limited, but not for the people involved. Finchspeer has gone on to develop the megagame *Bandersnatch* for Sinclair Research to bring out on the QL in the New Year, with a royalty from each unit sold going back to the Imagine Liquidators to help pay back the company's debts. It is a critical time for its directors, Dave Lawson and Ian Heatherington, who are naturally afraid of any adverse publicity. Even as I was in London seeing the rough cut of the TV programme, Ian Heatherington was on the phone trying to get hold of Paul Andersen. When I returned to Ludlow that Friday evening, I was greeted with a message that Heatherington had rung me to find out the same thing, having heard that we were writing about the story. Unfortunately for him he spoke to our Financial Director, and was told that as he still owed us £5,825, it wasn't sound sense to bother us!

We phoned him on the following Monday morning, when he spoke to Kevin Foster and gave him the quotes used in this article. He

also implied that if we printed anything he didn't like, we would be making him a rich man. Implications of libel actions are all very well. The fact remains that CRASH, along with other publications, had been promised payments by both Imagine's promotional department and (in our case) by Heatherington personally. These never arrived. But at the time, he and Lawson were assigning assets out of Imagine into another company hard to accept Heatherington's comments to us at face value when (whether intended or not) his absence put a total block on payments. Yet equally it must have been clear to him that payments could not be met.

WINDING DOWN

With knowledge that VNU had successfully issued a winding-up order on Imagine, the rest of the company's creditors began jamming the

of character with their recent actions in moving assets from Imagine to Finchspeer, and gives strength to Bruce Everiss who said, 'All they're trying to do is finance Finchspeer with capital from San Francisco.'

The significance of the passport signing became more apparent when it was realised that both men had taken their wives with them on the trip to America at a cost estimated by Everiss to be possibly as high as £10,000, and that at a time when creditors were crawling all over the building trying to get paid.

On the day Mark returned from the races, wrapped in bandages and driven by someone else, he arrived at Imagine headquarters to find the bailiffs were in. One of the items they impounded was his pride and joy, the Ferrari Boxer. Paul Andersen recalls that he seemed stunned and totally out of his depth. He didn't know what to do or who to blame; it seemed he was genuinely unaware that things

are now working freelance on games for Ocean, and others, including **John Gibson** have founded a new Liverpool company with partial backing from Ocean called **Denton Designs** and their first game, an adventure entitled *Gift From the Gods* should be released through Ocean shortly. Mark Butler is working with his father in another software company called Voyager. Stephen Blower worked for the year as a freelance and is now at Ocean, where he has recently been made a director. Of the collapse of Imagine he had this to say, 'Through greed, or little boys playing at big business, or whatever it was that carried it all they ruined something that was worthwhile carrying on with.'

Heatherington added, 'My attitude has always been that it's all over now, and what we'll do is quickly get our lives back together again. I don't want people bringing back something that happened six or seven months ago. What we're doing now, Dave and I, is improving on megagames to produce something quite startling. We want to bow out at the top.'

In summing up his unique experience in watching the death of the software giant, BBC director Paul Andersen said, 'It was a fascinating time in a city at the focus of the software business. It's a shame it all fell apart - there were a lot of talented people there who were let down. It's a bit like a movie that never got made, all the technicians and all the energy, but the producers failed. It's going to be interesting to see what will come of them all.'

With the finish of Imagine, the TV programme may have looked as though it was over too. However Ocean bought a major portion of Imagine's assets and so Paul Andersen had a finale thrown in his lap. Filming continued at Ocean's offices in Manchester, as they worked on *Hunchback II*. The BBC may not have got the story of the Imagine megagames, but at least they managed to follow the development of computer games from concept to release, and in the process they saw a fascinating slice of corporate life.



Moving on from Imagine, the BBC crew finished the programme off with Ocean. Here, the children of Lostock School, Stretford, search for bugs and give their verdict on a pre-production copy of the new game *HUNCHBACK II* as the film camera turns over.

switchboard to find out what was going on. CRASH was one of them. The official line was that things were quite normal. But no one knew where Lawson, Heatherington and Butler were. Everiss told Paul Andersen, 'Mark didn't know where they'd gone. The only person they told was Andrew Sinclair, who basically's just David's gopher, and Andrew has been spying on Mark and myself and reporting on a daily basis to them in San Francisco.'

One press mention did suggest that the two directors were in the States trying to raise venture capital in Silicon Chip Valley to save Imagine, but this would appear to be out

had reached such a state, or that his co-directors had fled the country and were in hiding (as everyone said), incommunicado. So closely did the TV crew follow the proceedings that they almost had their camera gear locked into the building by the bailiffs!

Mark went off, to return two which they both part-owned at a time when Imagine was hopelessly in debt, and desperately required those assets if it was to have a hope of staying alive. Recognition of this fact can be seen in that a royalty on every copy of *Bandersnatch* sold by Sinclair will be going back to Imagine's liquidators.

Some of the programmers

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BY DAVID CRANE



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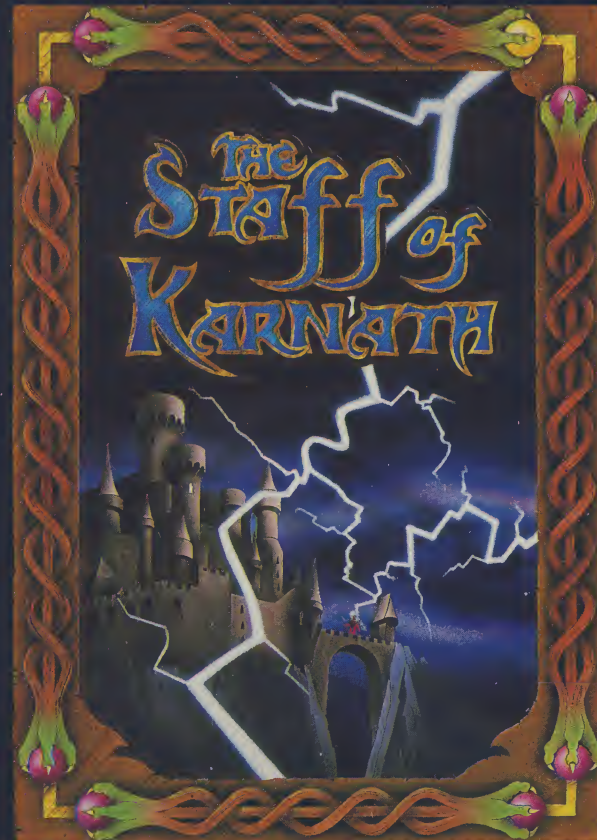
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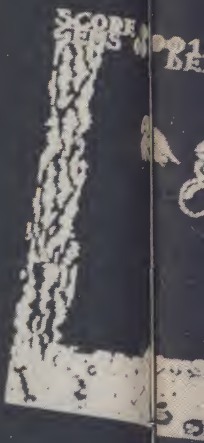
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Following the successful response to the *Atic Atac* (June) and *Sabre Wulf* (August) map competitions, **ULTIMATE** presents yet another opportunity exclusively to **CRASH** readers to show off their graphic skills. This time, together with **CRASH**, they are running a double-barrelled competition, and invite you to send in either a map of *Underwurlde* or of *Knight Lore*.



THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS



You can send in a map for one of these games, or you can enter both competitions separately. It's up to you. What we don't want is an entry which actually combines both games in one map!

Remember to make your maps as detailed and accurate as possible with a key to objects and their uses, hazards and physical objects within locations. We are looking for well designed and attractive looking maps with clever presentation.



6 SPECTRUM+ COMPUTERS TO BE WON

THE PRIZES

First Prize in both competitions is a glittering trophy, similar to those awarded to the winners of the previous competitions. The *Atic Atac* winner received the superb Golden Key of ACG, while the *Sabre Wulf* winners received the ACG Amulet.

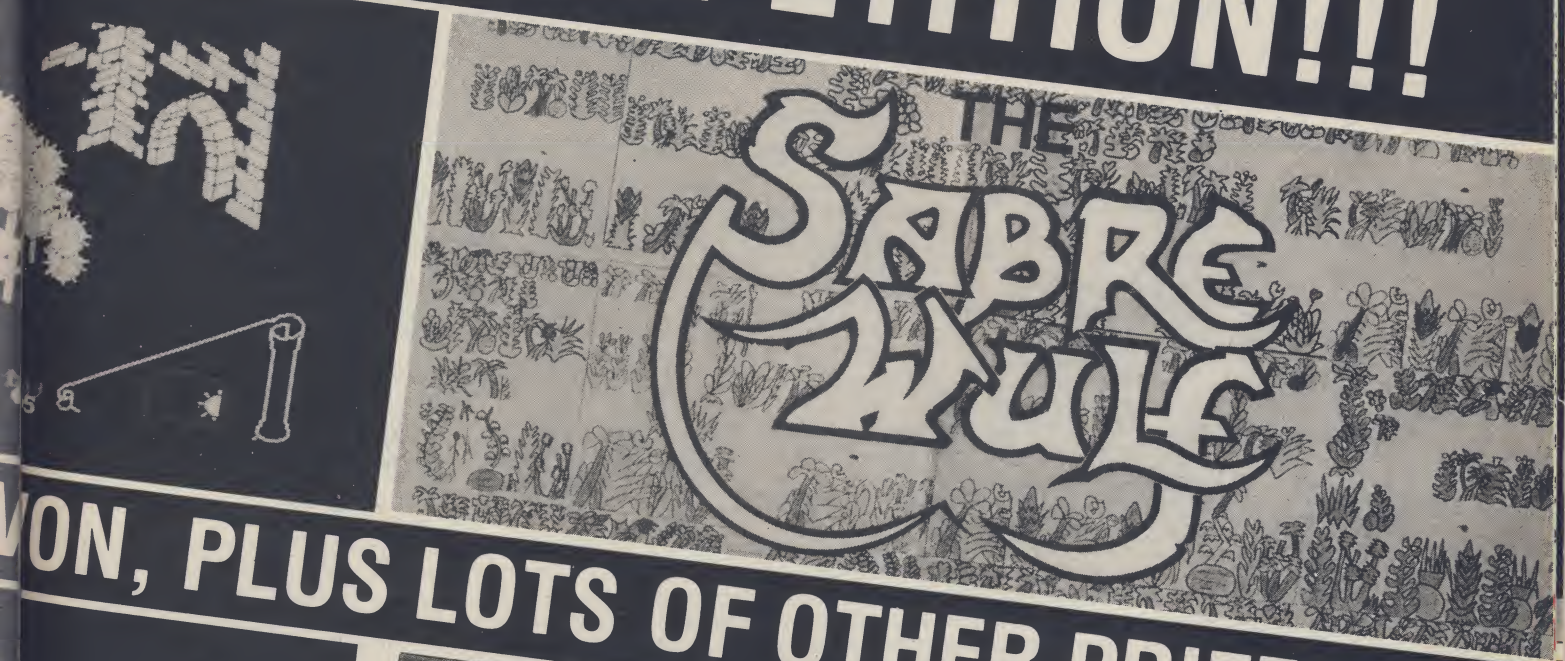
The lucky winners of *Underwurlde* and *Knight Lore* will also receive a sparkling new Spectrum+ and a mixed bag of **ULTIMATE** goodies including software, t-shirts, hats etc. Second and Third prize winners in both categories will also receive a Spectrum+ and the **ULTIMATE** goodies.

The winning entries will be published in **CRASH** at a later date. Entries should be sent to: **ULTIMATE COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than the first post January 31 1985.





MAS COMPETITION!!!



WON, PLUS LOTS OF OTHER PRIZES!!!



PLEASE REMEMBER to include suitably stamped addressed envelopes/postal tubes, if you wish your entry to be returned after the competition.

As we promised two issues ago when the Sabre Wulf Map Competition results were announced, here is the short story which accompanied the entry of Charles P. Cohen

SABRE MAN IN HIS FIRST ADVENTURE

JUNGLE

*There are two casualties of society,
Those who cannot use a computer,
and
Those who live in a Fridge.*

(Charles Cohen 11/8/84)



Chapter 1

THE stench of the jungle finally reached my nose. It came as such a shock that it took several seconds to realise its significance. My eyeballs rolled to behold the view. In a flicker of Neurons my previously incapacitated brain oriented itself to my whereabouts. The Jungle – a clearing of some magnitude. Trees, plants, black things with holes in the middle, bristling with bristles and coloured with colours.

Within me, something stirred. Lunch, I reckoned, but no, it was only my heart beating fast. Fear swept through my body, and out of my feet, as a voice, low and fearsome, rumbled through the trees.

'Welcome, mortal, to the stench filled jungle of ACG.'

It sounded like Terry Wogan – perhaps this is Alton Towers.

'I am the guardian of the Jungle and its air freshener. You have been selected to carry out the task of collecting the four parts of the Amulet of ACG. If you complete the task beset you, the Amulet, cast in gold, will be awarded to the best mapper of the Jungle.'

'What do I get?' I retorted respectfully.

'The air freshener, infidel. However, I may also consider releasing you. So, morsel of Swiss Cheese, prepare to be spewed into the Jungle.'

I did not like the idea of being spewed anywhere, but replied cordially, 'Thank you, Terry.'

As I was transported, or whatever, I am sure I could hear him sobbing. I can't think why – I didn't insult him – whoever he was.

Chapter 3

UPON leaving the clearing I met another fellow human person. I first caught sight of him running from the East, waving frantically, with spear and shield. I reasoned that he may have been in peril. As he approached, a snake-like something appeared directly in his path. Being the civil and public spirited person that I am, I called to him to look out. He seemed to take no notice, and then had the audacity to walk unharmed over the creature.

Assuming that he understood the Queen's English, I exclaimed, 'That's good. How do you do it?'

There came no reply. He just ran at me. Again, letting my instincts take over, I drew my weapon and stabbed at him. Too far away. I inadvertently returned my sword to its sheath. As I did all went black, I was thrust backwards and slammed into a wall of trees. He was still advancing. I stood up, drew my swordly thing and... The boulder just waddled off in the other direction.

'Um Bongo,' it uttered just as a Hippo passed it.

Hippopotamus – a big, purple, hairy lump of an animal, bounding towards me like a sloppy puppy. It looked too cute to stab, but maintaining my stiff upper lip attitude, I poked it just for good measure. As it raced by, I felt a twinge of guilt.

Presently I reached a corner, and took it to be faced by yet another corner. As I rounded the latter, more nasties appeared, this time a scorpion and a rather moronic looking parrot. A short slaughter later, I found myself headed North, around several disorienting passages and into a clearing not unlike the one from which I started.

Similar, that is, except for one thing. In the corner, glimmering in sunlight, was a quarter piece of the extraordinary Amulet. I hastened towards it.

Chapter 4

THE air was filled with a dulcet tune, and the voice of the guardian reappeared.

'One piece is all that you have found, collect three more and outward bound.'

'Very nice, Terry,' I whispered, sarcastically.

'Shut up, and get on with your impossible task, crouton features.' At that I was returned to my normal insane condition and dwindled off, by now feeling rather fatigued.

So my travels continued, for a short time anyway, because I came across an extremely odd odment, in the shape of a very odd bottle. This bottle was in the shape of a man, and about the size of an Action Man. Bravely, I unscrewed the head. Why, I don't know, I mean I'm not getting paid for this (*you sure aren't -Ed*). Within the bottle lay a liquid. Goodo – I thought – perhaps it's tea. So I drank some.

'Extra Life!' bellowed Terry Wogan.

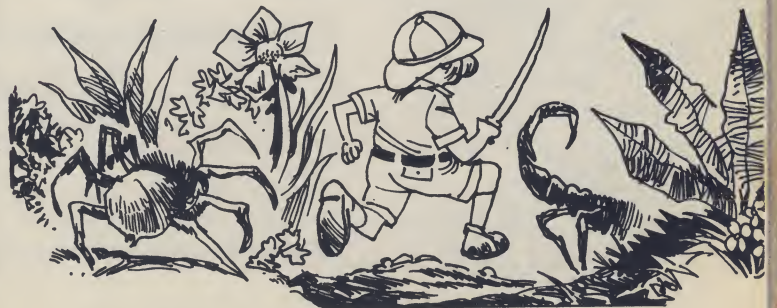
'Spot on!' I replied, not quite knowing what he meant.

After that brief, but very poignant encounter, I trotted off again, slaughtering innocent animals, prodding hippos and warthogs and generally savaging the savages.

Soon I stumbled over something new. A monstrous flower in the middle of the path. When I first saw it, it was only an iddy little thing, but as I approached it burst into flower, a big yellow obtrusion onto which I trod.

That I regretted. For as soon as I squashed it, I was left immobilized for an uncomfortable period of time (– so what's new)?

Still, after my bout of *immobilitis*, I was back on my blistered feet, flying along at a cracking pace, until...



Chapter 2

EVERY muscle in my body seized up as I was spewed into the Jungle. Soon, however, my legs unknotted themselves and I became aware of my surroundings.

I was in a similar clearing to the last one, but with one major difference. I was wearing some really ludicrous clothes. Upon my head was a pith helmet, and I was clad in khaki. My instincts told me I was mad, but the label on the shorts read **C&A 100% Cotton**. Figures. Only C&A could produce something like this.

Next came another major revelation. Hanging loosely on my back was an elongated letter opener. Perhaps Mr. Wogan isn't so evil after all – this will be useful for opening coconuts and passion fruit. At that time I was still in a daze, but as sure as eggs are eggs, I was not alone. The ground in front of me heaved and a small hole appeared. From it emanated a nasty-looking creature, resembling a spider. Without thinking I drew my letter opener. Stab, stab, swipe, schylik! It disappeared. This was not the last time I would see the thing, as more appeared all the while, and suffered the same fate.

I noticed something in an alcove on the other side of the clearing. It looked remarkably like a pith helmet of the sort I had on, sitting on a pile of wood.

Gadzooks! – a grave! Another unfortunate had also ventured here and been reaped. In a mark of respect I crossed it, but as I picked it up – splat – it had gone.

At that same moment another fiend appeared. This time a very vicious looking bush fire, sweeping across the clearing at me. Seeking a way out, I dashed blatantly through a gap in the trees.

Chapter 5

'GADZOOKS!' was my first word. The shock was so great I nearly fainted.

As I passed yet another corner, I waltzed straight into an enormous wolffy thing, spurring and gleeping and running with great power. With nowhere to turn, I drew my letter opener in a pathetic Last Stand. An Englishman should go down fighting. I did too.

As I cascaded across the undergrowth, I half expected to see Terry Wogan descending from the trees, releasing upon the foul creature the wrath of ten thousand mutant space invaders. To the contrary, however, he just laughed and commented to the effect that I was incompetent. What a liberty! I shall never listen to his radio program again! Sabre Wulf indeed!

When I had got over that minor trauma, I meebled off again and eventually reached a forbidding mountain range. How I managed to reach there, I don't know - the Jungle is more confusing than the Barbican.

After obtaining another potion thingy, I clambered along the side of the mountains, hoping for a way out. Sure enough, there was one, but before I took it, I ran into another triffidy thing, this time a blue one.

Whizzo! - I became super fast and invulnerable! Double Whizzo! I speed off at double speed, all over the place, and presently arrived at a nasty's hut. The door was open, but on trying, it appeared I could not get in! I decided to wait for tea time, when I was sure they would return. However, none appeared, so I thought it better to depart.

Chapter 6

IT is now a long time since I wrote last. Since then I have obtained a further two parts of the Amulet.

Each time I get a new piece, Terry Wogan cuts in with his tune and piece of inane poetry. I never knew he had it in him. Come to think of it, I wish I'd never found out.

I've found plenty of things around here. Little ponds are all over the place, but I don't have any swimming shorts, so am unable to bathe. Objects of all sorts are in abundance.

As regards food, I've been really disappointed by the lack of exotic fruits, and women are in short supply too. On that account I wouldn't wish this place to my mother-in-law. For some (Percy Throwup) this place is paradise. Being an avid watcher of his gardening spot on Blue Peter, I've been able to identify many plants.

I have discovered three different triffid variants. One, a vile mauve, causes wholesale de-orientation. It takes a real mental effort to do anything in this state. There are red ones too, which slow one down and make one invulnerable for a short time. This is all very well but, as a matter of patriotism, I'd rather be dead than red.

The final triffid plant is the most boring. It returns one to one's normal useless mode. In my opinion that's not on. It never happened to Tarzan.

My present position is in a corner bordered on one side by a stone wall. Perhaps it is the lair of Wogan. If I get there with all four pieces of his wotsit, perhaps he will lend me his air freshener.



Chapter 7

EUREKA! - I've found it! The final quarter of the Amul-wotsit! Now to find the keeper chappie - the final chapter, the end, finis etc. I'll soon be free to go back to my modest flat in Islington and read the Financial Times with my slippers on! Spiffing - what?

I'm nigh certain that Terry is situated in the cave to my left. I can see it now - the front page of the Daily Telegraph - Islington Business Man Escapes Stench Filled Jungle of ACG.

Perhaps an O. B. E. is in order. Me - an O. B. E. - perhaps even a Kingtlorehood. Here it is. the cave. The Guardian's Lair! Nearly there. Oooh.

'Who are you?'

'I'm the Guardian of the air freshener of the gate.'

'You're not Terry Wogan?'

'Terry who? I see you have the whole of the Amulet. Good. You may advance.'

'Does this mean I can go home to my wife, overdraft and O. B. E. ?'

'Certainly not.'

'I say, that's not cricket - I'm a British citizen, I command certain rights. I -'

'Shut up you posh twerp. I don't care if you're the Queen's uncle. You're going on.'

'Where to?'

'The Underwulde.'

'Is Terry Wogan there?'

'English cretin. What's he got against the Irish?'

And so ended the last page of the Charles P Cohen diaries, which were found lying outside the cave of the Guardian by another poor fool had had passed through the Jungle on his way to the Underwulde. He managed to Data Post it to us before so going.

Where are they now, these heroes? Hopping around in their suits of armour, no doubt, mapping books and diaries in hand. . .



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U.S. Reviews

"... Boulder Dash should be leading contender for anybody's action-game-of-the-year award."
Burt Hochberg **GAMES Magazine**

"... a magical mix of challenge, charm and originality ... easily one of the best computer games of the year."
Michael Blanchet **Chicago Tribune Syndicate**

"This game will be mentioned in my will ... what silicon is and integrated circuits were always meant to be ... subtle brilliance and unceasing magic ... in a class by itself ..."
Craig Holyoak **Deseret News**

"First Star has done a first-rate job on BOULDER DASH ... the graphics are dazzling ..."

The Video Game Update

"BOULDER DASH takes the cake ... the overall quality is excellent ..."
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**A
Crash
Smash**

BOULDER DASH

Producer: **Front Runner**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

Front Runner, the software marketing organisation of K-Tel, has here released an American program which has been converted for the Spectrum. It was originally a big hit in the States for **First Star** for the Atari. It is also a very unusual game, that relies on a simple concept with complex ramifications.

You play the starring role of Rockford, a gem collector in a

series of 16 underground caverns, lettered A to P. You can elect to play from caves A, E, I or M on difficulty levels 1 to 3, or from A only on levels 4 and 5. Difficulty reflects on the number of jewels to be collected and the time limit allowed.

The basic game play is not unlike those 'Digger' games where you burrow through the earth dropping boulders on nasties, but that puts it all too simply. There are a great many combinations available between all the screens which uses elements of boulders, earth which can be removed, gems and several types of nasty which chase you. Removing the earth from under a boulder will cause it to fall down, but one boulder stacked on top of another will also topple off, so you must take great care, and of course this immediately adds a strategic element to the game. On one screen you have to create space for an amoeba to grow, then release a load of butterflies from a lower portion of the cave which turn to gem stones when they meet the amoebae – the problem being

B·O·U·L·D·E·R



Rocks and Rocks for Rockford

that the butterflies kill Rockford. This gives a simple example of what the game is like

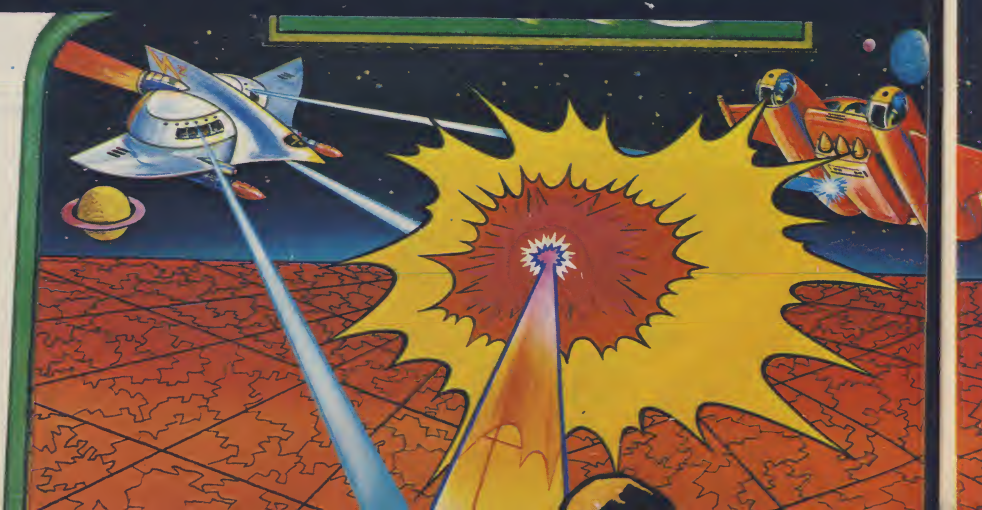
Each cave is several times larger than the screen playing area and the screen automatically scrolls to keep pace with Rockford as he moves about, shovelling earth and moving boulders. Additionally there are four short interactive

puzzles which you are entitled to play after completing caves D, H, L and P.

CRITICISM

● 'What a strange game this is at first, with no obvious connection to anything else I've ever seen. The idea is totally and completely original – a

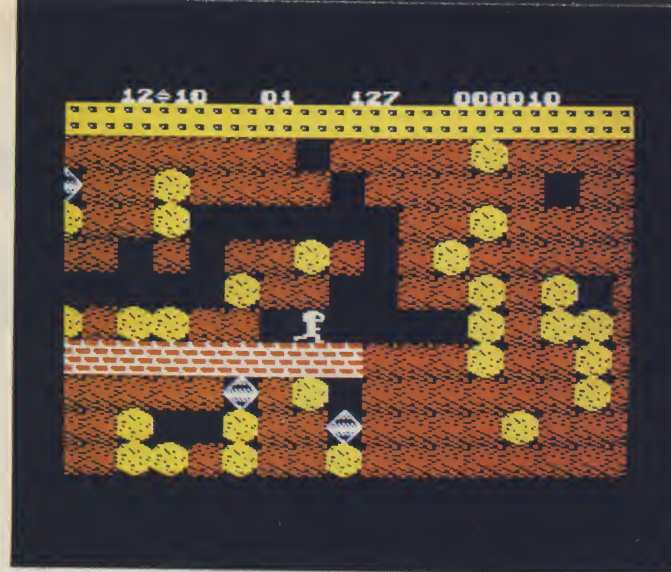
Watch out! The Now in new



D·A·S·H

wierd sense of strategy, forward planning and arcade skill are the qualities needed to play this game. If you don't possess one of these skills, then forget it. I found *Boulder Dash* immensely enjoyable, not because of its originality and wierd sense of humour, but because of its compulsive playing ideas. It's a long time since I've played a game as absorbing as this. You tend to get obsessed with it. Graphics are different, to say the least, bright and detailed. Sound is continuous with plenty of spot effects. An incredibly addictive game and well worth buying. Brill!

● 'Boulder Dash is aptly named! At first sight it looks like a number of other digging games and the graphics don't immediately strike you as extra special. Playing the game convinces otherwise. Within minutes I was sucked into it and hours went by. Boulder Dash is a brilliant program with a mean streak a mile wide in it. There is one particular room ('I think) which had me working for almost two hours without a break to beat its cruel sense of



Rockford makes bold dash!

humour. Basically you release a piece of earth from a hole on top of a large chamber and for the next few seconds gems and boulders cascade down in a very realistic fashion. It is then a case of picking your way round to get at the gems without being squashed by a boulder. Very clever, amazingly, dangerously addictive, Boulder Dash should keep everyone going for ages and ages.'

● 'This amazing game is so simple, it's ridiculous! Yet once started it's impossible to leave

it. Rockford is amusingly animated, tapping his foot in boredom if you keep him standing still for too long, eyes flicking nervously, as well they might with all that weight of stone above his head! The movement of boulders and gems is so logical, when huge stacks of them fall that it can be a joy to watch. With the five skill levels and 16 screens to play through, this game represents good value even for the slightly high price, and I can recommend it to anyone. It's excellent and tremendously compelling to play.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: E, O/F, K up/down, M, X/SYM, C left/right, N, V or B to fire, or use the cursors and Ø
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Protek, AGF, Fuller
Keyboard play: responsive, plenty of options
Use of colour: excellent, very unusual combinations
Graphics: unusual, generally excellent
Sound: excellent
Skill levels: 5
Lives: 3
Screens: 16
General rating: highly addictive and playable, original and good value, highly recommended.

Use of computer	91%
Graphics	90%
Playability	98%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	98%
Value for money	90%
Overall	93%

Cylons are here! ve-jangling 3D.

Alien Spaceships (O.K, so what's new!) A'n'F have updated Cylon Attack (a very sought after game) so popular that A'n'F had great difficulties to improve the game, but they have done it. Cylon Attack is now in isometric perspective. Imagine playing new Cylon Attack in isometric perspective (3D). **£5.75**

NEW FOR SPECTRUM

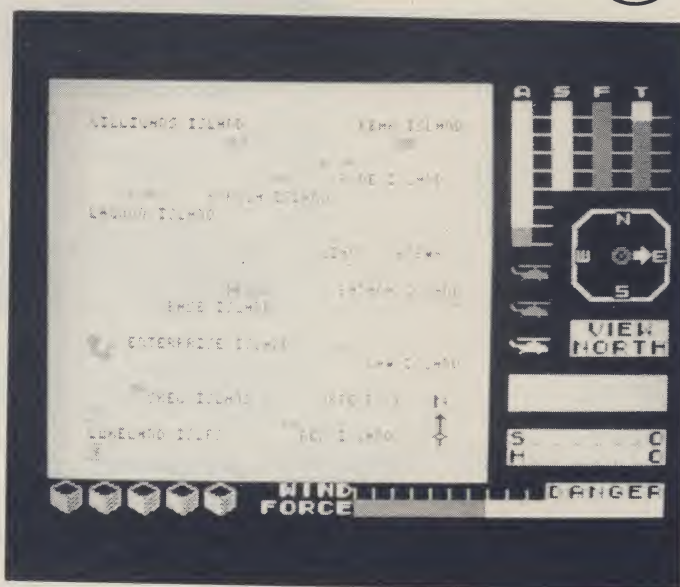
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CYCLONE

Producer: **Vortex**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Costa Panayi**

Sequels are all the rage, and why not if they work well? Vortex here are following up their jet fighter 3D game *TLL*, but there are a few important differences to the former game. For a start off *Cyclone* features a helicopter (also the rage at the moment!) and you are not zapping round dots, but more usefully rescuing people from outlying islands and collecting valuable boxes by using the winch and cable from the helicopter.

As in *TLL* the playing area is quite large and a map is provided, which shows the Base island set in the middle of a sea dotted with groups of small islands. Once again, author Costa Panayi has drawn in the detail with a blocky shaded 3D which describes the islands, the relief on them, the buildings, and the shadow of the machine itself on the ground.

Apart from the view of the playing area (which can be seen from the North or the South point of view as the player desires), there are the essential instruments done as bar codes which are an altitude indicator, speedometer, fuel and time left. There are also two other important indicators, one for aircraft and one for wind force. In *Cyclone* you will encounter low flying Jets (hanging around from the base

in *TLL* no doubt) with which you may well collide. On the map a red cyclone can be seen weaving around the area. In its proximity the disturbance will affect handling of the helicopter and may cause you to crash. Winching up crates or people is done by centring the machine over the object and descending to a low level, whereupon the winch will automatically lower the cable and automatically collect the object.

CRITICISM

● '*Cyclone* sports many of *TLL*'s features such as the fab graphics but the main difference this time is that you fly a helicopter instead of a jet. The style of play is very similar to that of *TLL*. As sequels go I felt there wasn't enough difference between the two games to warrant your getting *Cyclone* if you've already got *TLL*, though *Cyclone* is still a good game within its own right. It's got all the makings of a fab game but in my opinion it is just not exciting enough – maybe the introduction of a fire button would have helped (I'm a sadist you see). Overall, a good game but lacks real advances over *TLL*.'

● 'After *TLL* my expectations were none too high for this latest release *Cyclone*, because I was one of those who thought that the former game lacked in content and things to do. I was proved to be wrong *Cyclone* has much more content with plenty to keep you busy and interested for quite a while. Graphics seem to be an improvement over *TLL* with

more 3D depth and shadowing. Normal and bright functions on the computer were hardly used to give the illusion of 3D, instead ink shadowing has been used and seems to work far better. The helicopter is well drawn and detailed. Rotor blades whizz round and give an excellent impression of rotating movement. One thing that I must say that has worked exceptionally well is the cyclone effect, giving your helicopter a rough ride. I like the addition of jets whizzing past you on occasion,

particular the shadow on the surface of the sea or ground is excellent. I also like the way you have to wrestle with the controls when you are near the cyclone – very realistic. The use of the North and South views is useful, especially when boxes are hidden on a beach under a cliff, and this forces you to search for them a bit more. The graphics are very good and make playing the game more interesting. Collecting refugees and crates is actually more exciting than zapping dots was in *TLL*, but generally I don't think it is very addictive because there isn't enough action involved.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1/Q up/down, O/P left/right, X for forward, M for map

Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, AGF, Protek

Keyboard play: very responsive, well positioned

Use of colour: excellent

Graphics: excellent

Sound: very good

Skill levels: progressive difficulty

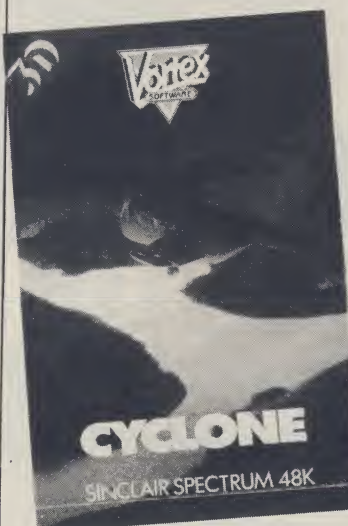
Lives: 3

Screens: scrolling

Special features:

General rating: considered to be more fun than *TLL* and very playable, but perhaps lacking a little in lasting appeal.

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	84%
Playability	76%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	81%
Overall	79%



although it can be confusing to know which way to go to avoid them. Colour and sound have been used realistically. Overall a far better game than *TLL* with much more content and playability – a distinct improvement.'

● 'The helicopter is very good, the way the rotors go, and it's very detailed, in par-

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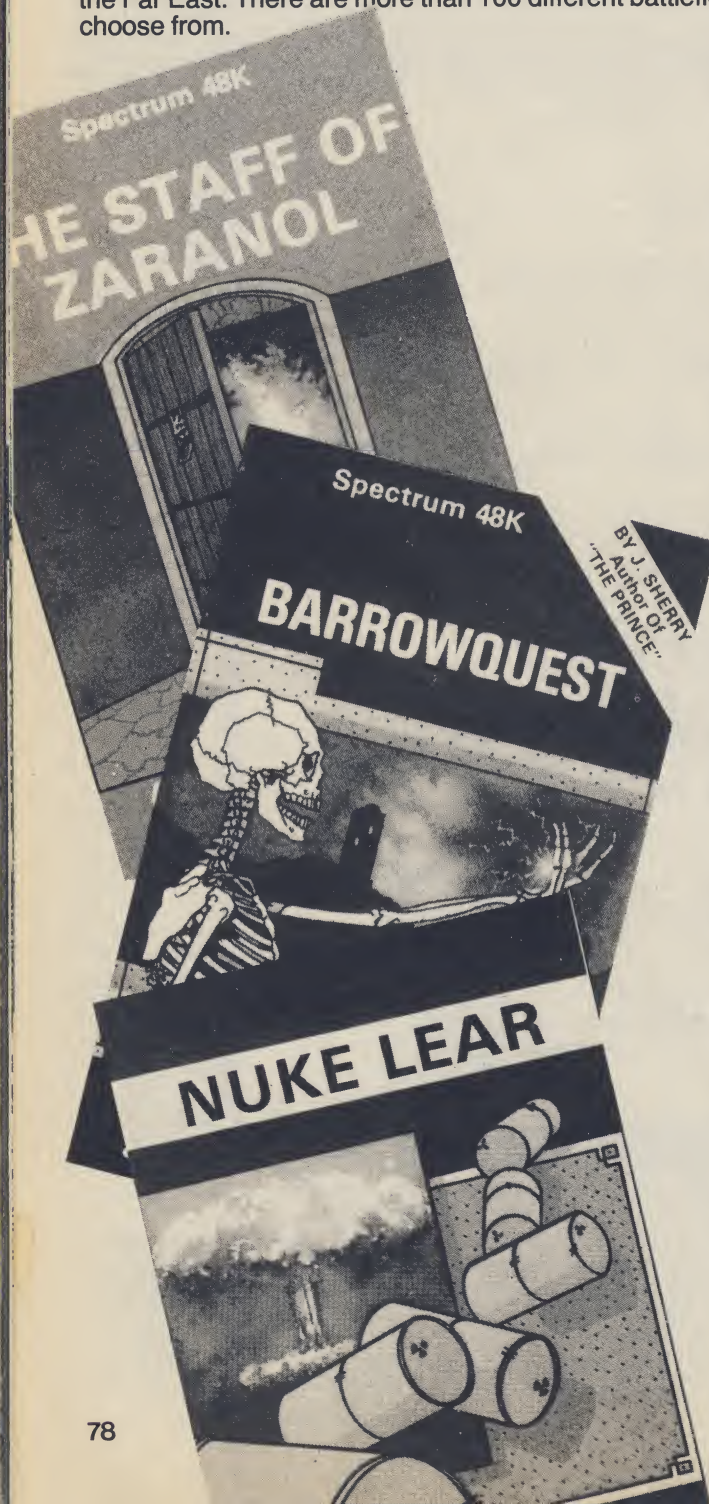
THE PRINCE is a strategy game for four players, pitting their wits against no less than 17 computer 'players'. The computer generates difficulties and it is up to the players to conspire to solve them; deception and skulduggery make for a machiavellian-type atmosphere.

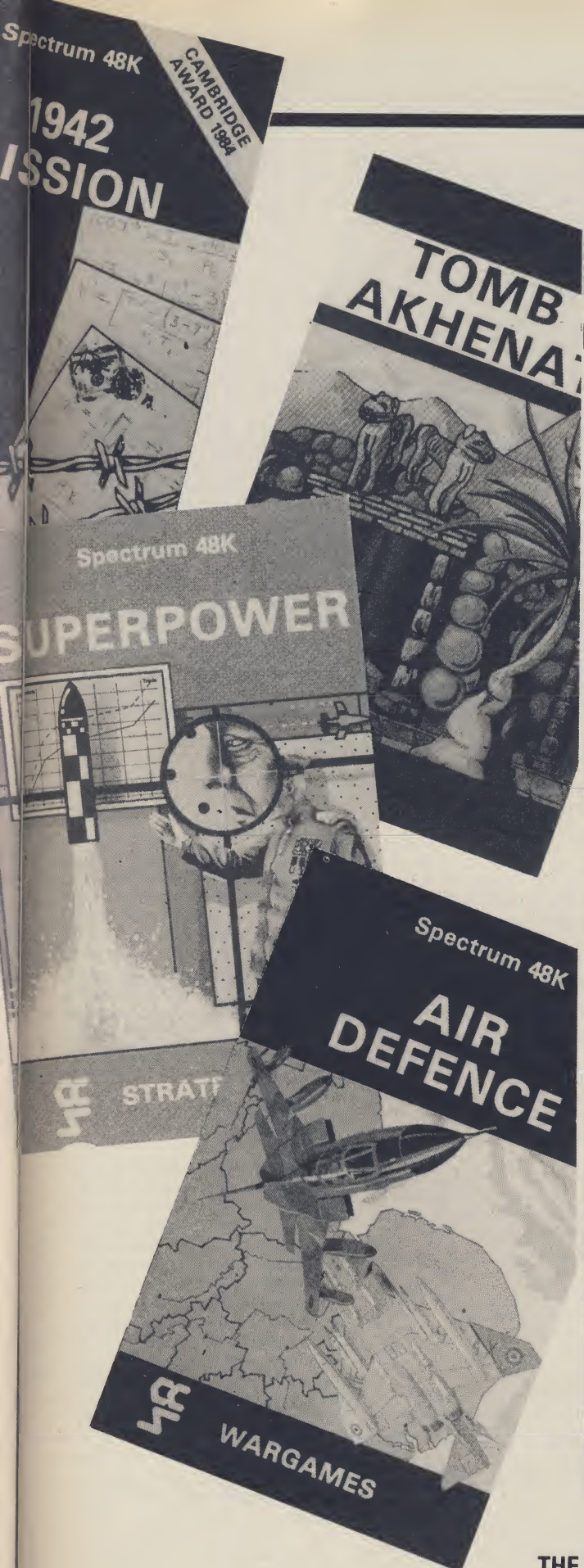
THE STAFF OF ZARANOL is an adventure game in which you, the Sorcerer's apprentice, release an evil demon. Can you banish him before the return of your master? There are 45 different locations, several containing clues to help you capture the demon.

BARROWQUEST features Grimblast, a black wizard, and Sartrak, a white wizard, battling for possession of a Power Gem known as Sartrak's Stone. Grimblast and his clan have captured the stone, and the task of Sartrak is to recover it.

In **1942 MISSION** you are in the shoes of a British Agent whose objective is to penetrate a German camp and make off with the secret Rocket Fuel plans. You begin by parachuting into Germany.

NUKE LEAR and **TOMB OF AKHENATEN** are two games in the 'Charlie Charlie Sugar' budget range. *Nuke Lear* involves storing drums of nuclear waste for safety. But beware, some of them have a tendency to fall into illegal caves where they will contaminate the environment. In *Akhenaten* you are the seeker after the lost treasure of the Pharaoh Akhenaten, venturing into the labyrinth of tunnels beneath the pyramid. Look out for the Spirit of the labyrinth!





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C. C. S. COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB, to arrive no later than first post **January 18 1985.**

VOLCANO

Producer: Computer Magic

Memory required: 48K

Retail price: £7.95

Language: machine code

The object of *Volcano* is to escape from an erupting – well, volcano. The game is quite different because it involves many different elements across forty screens above ground and over 290 below ground.

In a sense it is a giant graphic adventure, where you control your man, guiding him around the streets of the threatened town, seeking useful objects from the buildings. Falling molten rocks are shown as red blobs which appear on the mapscapes, while rivers of red lava slowly engulf the roadways, making your task increasingly difficult. Generally, you must escape to reach a boat and flee the natural wrath behind you. There are several maps of the town, with an animated character which you control. There is the medieval city with its various precincts, the commercial section and shopping section; below the city there exists a maze of underground passages which are shown in wire frame 3D. Back above ground, your route to freedom is blocked by dangerous marshes and jungles, and even before leaving the city you may encounter riots and get killed.

Useful objects are things like dynamite for blowing rocks out of the way or matches which will enable you to see your way underground. Food is also essential to keep up strength, which wanes rapidly. Movement control is by left/right rotation and forwards

below ground, with four way movement above ground. Whilst perambulating below the surface, it is well to remember that above ground the volcano is still erupting, blocking the town's streets with debris.

Volcano has a random element built into the program so that, except for the first three screens, dynamite, lava, rocks, food and ropes will rarely appear in the same place twice. Scoring is done by time alive.

CRITICISM

● 'Volcano is a totally different type of game. I can honestly say I haven't played anything like it before. As a game it isn't mega-brill, but it isn't mega-asterisks either. The graphics are simple but serve their purpose. The attraction of this game is that there is a lot to it, there are numerous screens to be discovered. *Volcano* is quite fun to play, but I did find it a bit repetitive after a while. It has some nice features such as, when you die it tells you how long you've been playing, while playing a catchy tune. The 3D underground maze looks uncannily like those 3D mazes you used to get from ZX81 games and some early Spectrum games, but this stage becomes very repetitive and boring after a while. Overall quite a good game but I think it's got limited appeal.'

● 'The main appeal of *Volcano* lies in its sheer size, because the graphics are not the sort that make you want to play compulsively. Again,

despite its size, you are confronted quite quickly by the inescapable fact that it's all been seen before on a smaller scale. The linked screens of the town make a large maze, where you waste time by going off the screen on a road only to find that it's a dead end on the next one. Herein lies the meat of the game, getting around fast enough before the ways are blocked to get all the things you need to survive. I found *Volcano* was quite playable but not addictive. Sheer size of a program isn't what makes a winner, and when you get down to it there isn't enough going on in the game to offer lasting appeal.

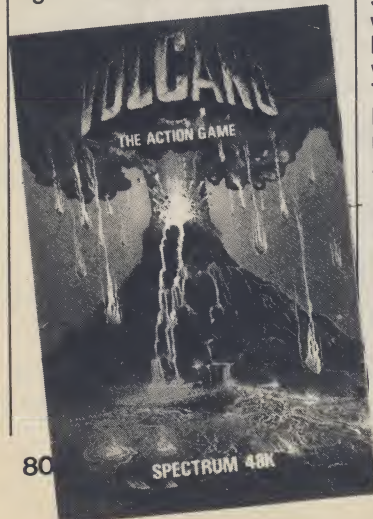
● 'Strange game this. It seems to have a mixture of adventure and strategy and a good memory is required. The game seems to be of a very old type, according to the graphics, although essentially they are adequate. Many points of this game are unfair; one major example is when you fall down a hole into the underground passageways. If you are lucky, you will get three matches to enable you to see the map that you collect when you fall down the hole. This map shows you the way to the exit and also the starting position, but unfortunately, and unfairly, it doesn't show you your present position, so in many cases it is totally useless. Lighting a match enables you to see the map for approximately five seconds – hardly enough time to focus on the map, sum up where the start and finish positions are, and then guess where you are. I'm sure this part of the game

requires you to have a photographic memory, not very helpful for 99.99 of the players. If you have unfortunately fallen down one of these holes you seemingly need no food, which now means unless you find your way out of this impossible maze of tunnels, you'll be doomed to stay there for the rest of your life (unless you turn the computer off). Perhaps this over-priced game should be re-written to allow for the novice player to have much more fun while playing this game – a quit key would be most useful.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right (above ground), 6/8 rotate left/right, 7 move forwards (below ground), C = collect, E = eat, X = explode dynamite, r = swing on rope
Joystick: not stated
Keyboard play: not over responsive, but well laid out
Use of colour: average
Graphics: small, simple, below average
Sound: good tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 330 plus
General rating: a very large game, but generally below average, especially at the price.

Use of computer	54%
Graphics	44%
Playability	49%
Getting started	60%
Addictive qualities	46%
Value for money	33%
Overall	45%



POLE POSITION

Producer: **Atarisoft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.99**
Language: **machine code**

At last, the long-awaited Spectrum version of one of the most famous arcade originals ever – Atari's 'Pole Position'. There were rumours earlier in the year that Atarisoft had released the game. It was seen at the Earls Court Computer Fair in September and almost immediately withdrawn after unfavourable comment from critics present.

The track picture is recognisably that of the arcade original, with the alternating red and white stripes on the road side, striped centre line, moving hills in the background and a long perspective which has the road moving from side to side depending on the car's position on it. Road signs also echo the original and provide a danger to those who go off the road.

You're up against lots of other racers on the road. The game commences from the start grid with a countdown. First you must qualify – 90 seconds in which you must achieve a lap time of better than 73 seconds to get onto the real race. If you hit another car or a hazard you explode and this loses you precious time. No matter how many times you crash you receive another car until the qualifying time has run out. Control includes left and right, brake and change of gears between hi and low. Scoring is by lap speed and 50 points per car passed.

CRITICISM

● 'It seems ironical that the original game that has inspired so many versions on the Spectrum should be the last to appear (at least I expect it's the last – there may be more sophisticated versions to arrive yet)! It also means that Atarisoft have a big job on their hands because a few of the versions have been excellent (*Full Throttle* for instance). *Pole Position* has managed to look very like the arcade original, which is good, but it doesn't play anything like as well. Perhaps this isn't surprising, but I thought the con-

trol of the car, overall, was a bit rough. The inlay has strategy tips on how to use gears, brakes and the inside lane wherever possible, but this isn't reflected in what you see on the screen. The road, for instance, scrolls past at the same speed, whatever speed your car is doing, which isn't very realistic; and I thought the car handling was a bit sluggish, whereas in the original it was very skittish, and therefore more exciting. The graphics are of a high standard, especially your vehicle, and generally *Pole Position* is enjoyable.'

● 'At last, it's arrived! Since spring I've been waiting to see this game when it was first advertised – nearly eleven months later, I'm actually playing it. Was it worth it, you might say? Well, it's the first racing game I've seen with multi-coloured graphics that work and decent sized computer controlled cars to race against. 3D perspective is pretty good, I like the way the colours of the race track alternate from red to white to give an impression of movement. I'd hardly call this game 'Pole Position' though, because it is only a race track and doesn't go through the various scenarios as arcade 'Pole Position' does. I can't see the point of having a speedometer in this game because no matter how high your speed is, the ground progresses at the same speed that you started at, the only difference being that you slide further on corners. I don't really think it was worth the eleven month wait, as in that time several other racing games have appeared that are equally good, if not

better, and besides, it is totally over-priced.'

● 'The 3D effect in *Pole Position* is quite pleasing with the multi-coloured mountains in the background creating a sense of space, and the road disappears satisfactorily. But the 3D animation of the other cars is a little bit jerky – signposts seem to hang

around rather a long while before finally flashing past. On the other hand they are all very detailed, which makes it difficult to animate fully. Car control is not over-responsive – or perhaps it would be more fair to say that the track doesn't seem to respond as well as your car movement! It also seems a shame that it takes so long to accelerate – surely this vehicle



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SKY RANGER

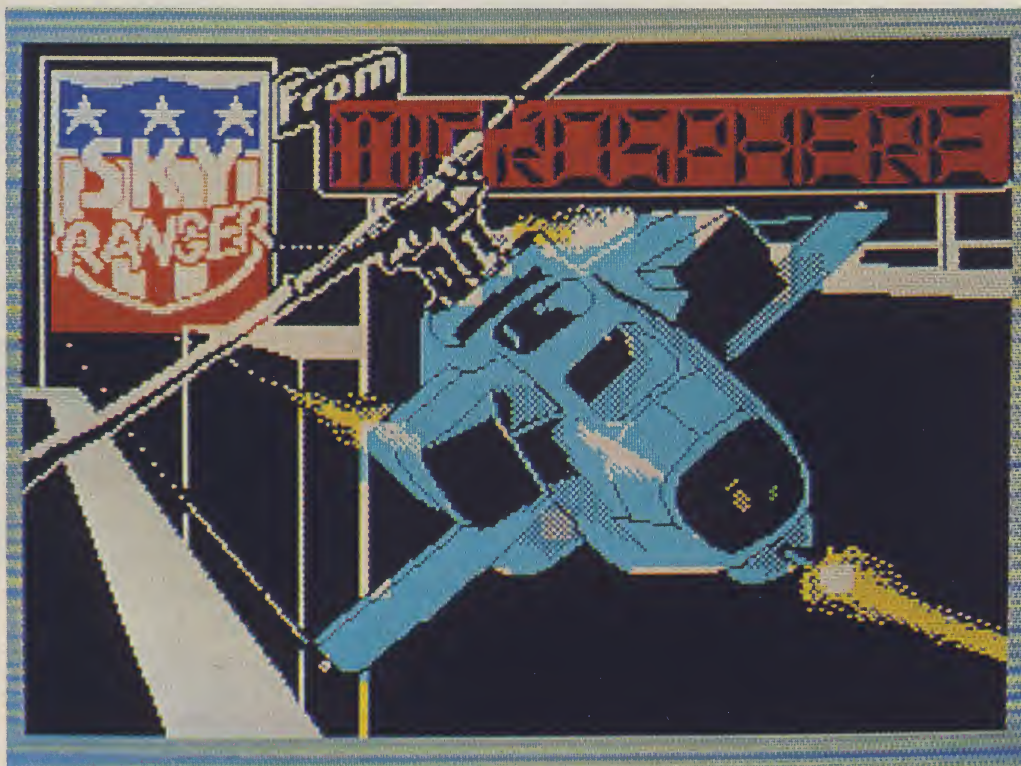
Producer: Microsphere
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £5.95
Language: machine code

There is a graffiti artist in Microsphere's *Skool Daze* who writes on the blackboard something to the effect that 'Sky Ranger is great' – a neat piece of pre-publicity for their second release. *Sky Ranger* is a helicopter. We've remarked before in CRASH how odd it is that software companies tend to have similar ideas at the same time, and there are a few helicopter scenarios around or in the pipeline.

Sky Ranger is situated in a large city full of skyscrapers, which allows for plenty of wire frame 3D. The 3D used here, however, is rather more complex than in most previous games of the type, and generally, the graphics are quite different from other Microsphere games.

The scenario plays heavily on old computer names, somewhat bastardised over the intervening years. It seems there will be a time when 'Watchers' will be placed in the skies of the city, servants, friends in the fight to make the city safe. The people will even give them nicknames, calling them after the primitive 20th century computers that delighted the children so much in the museums.

But soon the Rics and the Drags, the Dors and the Trums will have enforced crime so successfully that they will turn to enforcing the lesser



offences. Then they will discover the city archives – still packed with ancient and never-repealed laws. The 'Watchers' have been programmed to enforce the law – and the city lives in fear...

Your mission is to seek out and destroy the Watchers using your electronic pulse generator.

The screen contains a view from the helicopter of the city streets. To the left and below the viewscreen are the instruments. These include the ubiquitous fuel gauge, and the machine uses it quite quickly. There are five fuel dumps in the city which can be visited once each during a game. As the city

is near the sea and fogs swirl in rapidly, a ceiling gauge shows the height of the cloud level. There is also an altitude meter and a speedo. Centrally placed is the all important compass and close range radar on which the Watchers appear. A five letter band indicates your proximity to a fuel dump, with the appropriate letter flashing. Destroying Watchers is done by firing when they are in the centre of the vid screen and the target indicator flashes red.

There are various skill levels which are accessed as in *Wheelie* through codes gained by completing a level. One aspect which makes the game harder is that the viewscreen is vulnerable to contact with buildings or watchers, and easily becomes cracked. These cracks remain with you during a game, making it increasingly harder to see where you are flying.

CRITICISM

● 'While first playing this game I was amazed to see an unthoughtful layout of the screen – it was cluttered and untidy, and difficult to make out what various instruments were and what they were used for. One thing Microsphere have always managed is to have a tidy looking screen. There's no doubting the quality of the 3D graphics – the black line on a yellow ground with hidden lines masked out makes for a very realistic

rosphere that had a lack of content. Flying around a city trying to locate and destroy the Watchers, is not my idea of fantastic fun. Okay, you have to refuel now and again, but that's not such a big deal. If you collide with a watcher, part of your screen cracks and shatters like a cobweb, very realistic indeed. But if you crash into the ground or into a skyscraper, you get one or two whacking big zig zag lines from the top to the bottom of the screen, and this makes life quite disconcerting, trying to seek and destroy with these huge lines down the centre of the screen. I would have thought it would have been quite adequate to just have the shattered cobweb effect, as this doesn't really destroy your vision but gives a nice effect. Not one of Microsphere's most entertaining games, I think they should stick to original ideas with wonderful graphics.'

Pole Position

would never qualify on a real track! More could have been made of the use of gears for speed and control than has been. Overall, quite a good race track game, but spoiled by the exceptionally high price tag – still, at least it isn't the £15 we originally feared it would be.'

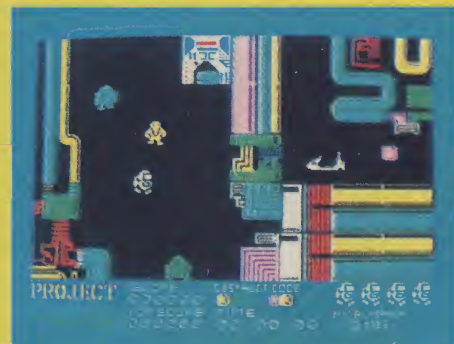
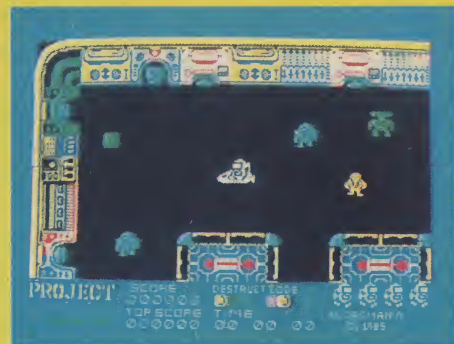
COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q to brake, A to change gear, or use the cursor keys
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very good, attribute problems kept to a minimum

Use of colour: good 3D effect, detailed and large
Graphics: bit clicky, nothing special, nice tune
Sound: progressive difficulty
Skill levels: N/A
Lives: 1
Special features: above average, but pricey.
General rating: 80

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	80%
Playability	71%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	52%
Value for money	49%
Overall	68%

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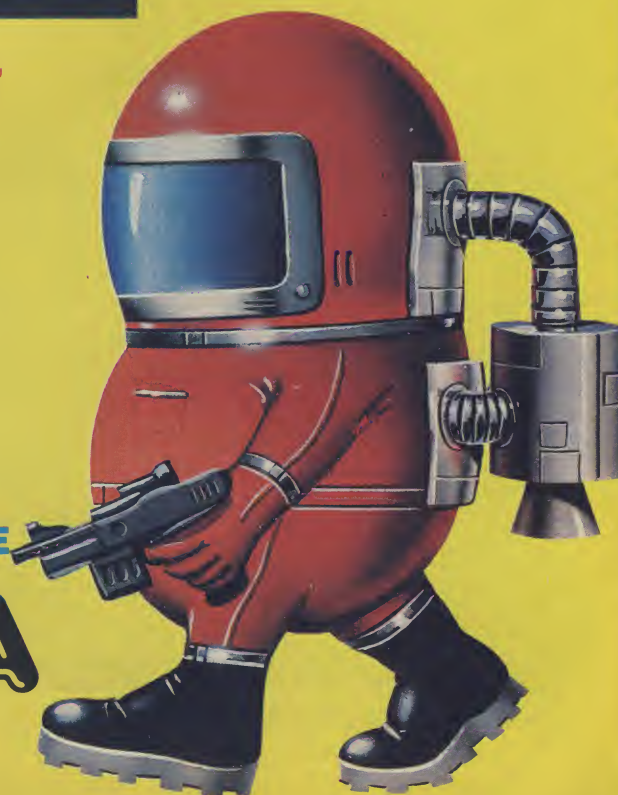
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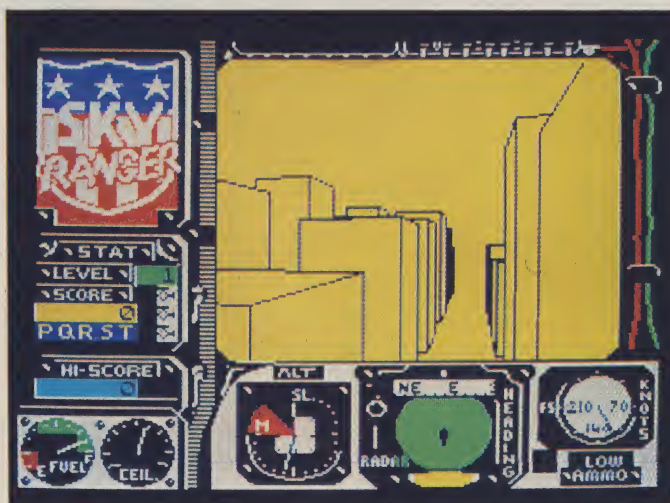
effect, and instead of the usual few scattered towers, here we have the feeling of flying through a real city. The real problem is that the game starts to pall after a while. Once the novelty of the graphics has become familiar you start to long for more action, and it is here that the game lacks somewhat. The 'Watchers' are not all that frequent, and although they will dash at you, they do not fire or protect themselves. Great graphics, but a bit thin on plot - surprising for Microsphere.

● This is the first game that Microsphere have produced that has line graphics. As one would expect, the line graphics are drawn efficiently and quickly to produce skyscraper style trenches and 3D perspective. The known features of this game are night flying, fog, which blanks out the details and descends quite rapidly at times (usually when you could well do without it). It is quite fun to fly about through the skyscraper corridors trying to track down 'Watchers' and destroy them. On the higher levels,

'Watchers' become more intelligent and more abundant. A high degree of skill is needed to get rid of them. I like the way that your windscreen is cobwebbed with cracks if you should hit a 'Watcher', but I found the large cracks that appear if you hit the ground too hard, or a building, begin to get in the way of the game. Overall quite a good flying game that maybe requires a bit more content to make it top notch.

COMMENTS

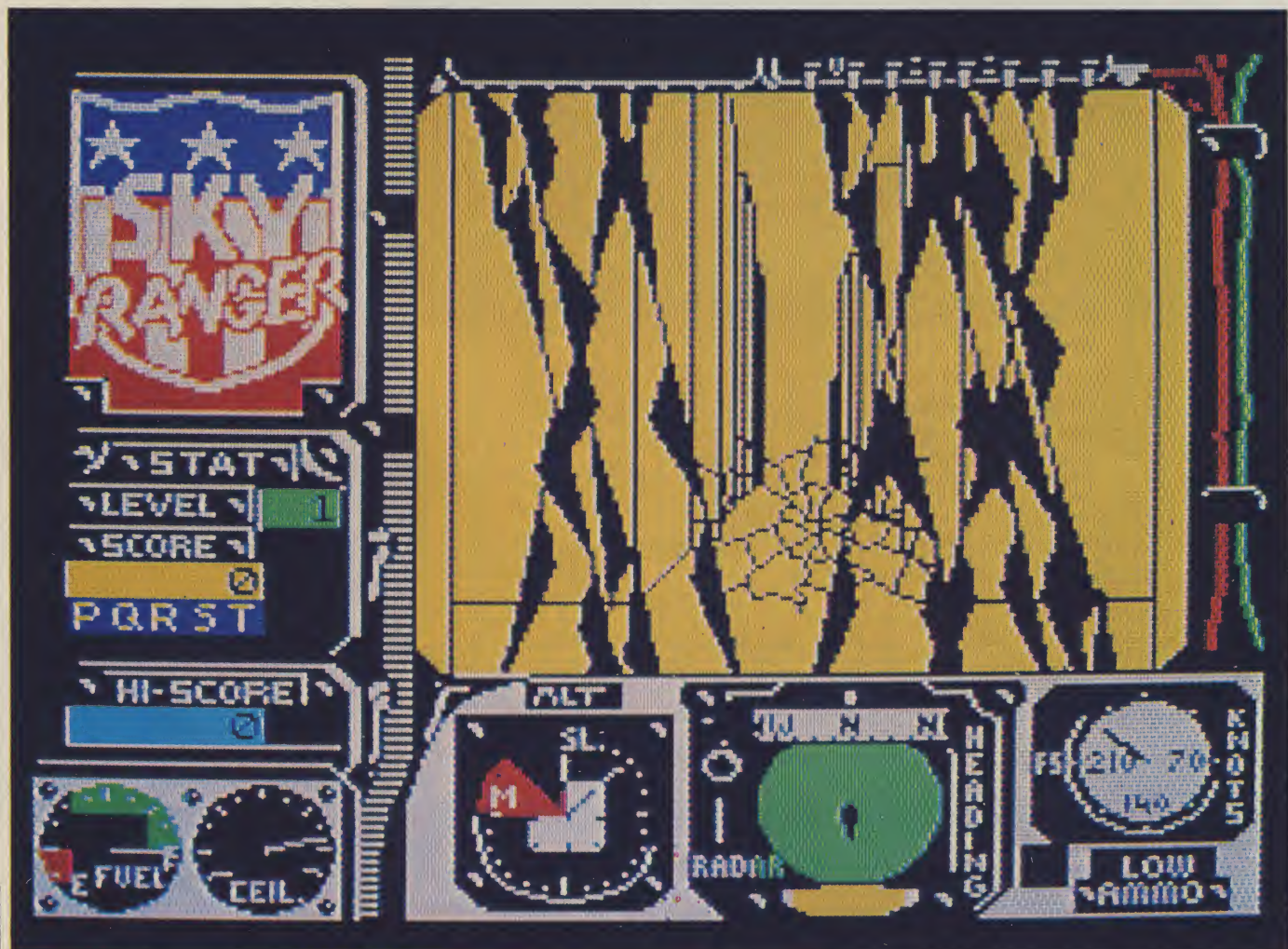
Control keys: user definable, preset are: CAPS to V/B to SPACE left/right, Y to P/H to ENTER up/down, Q to T/A to G faster/slower, 1 to 0 to fire
Joystick: almost any via UDK
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: sensible and avoids attribute problems
Graphics: excellent 3D detail, oddly untidy on the instruments
Sound: not much, mostly a sound for the helicopter speed
Skill levels: progressive with access codes



Lives: percentage of damage
Screens: 1
Special features:
General rating: above average for content, very good for graphics, perhaps a disappointment coming from Microsphere, but still a good flying game.

Use of computer	81%
Graphics	79%
Playability	65%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	58%
Value for money	69%
Overall	71%

A much damaged chopper, but still flying.



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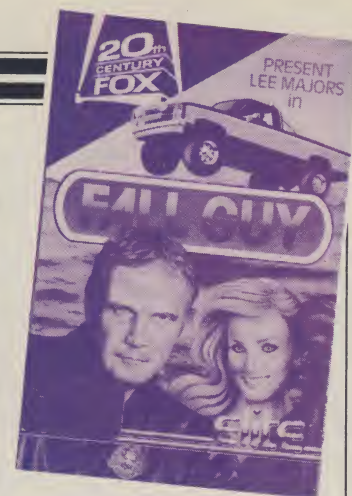
Producer: Elite Software
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £6.95
Language: machine code

Anyone who ever saw the oddball movie starring Peter O'Toole called *Stuntman* will have guessed that a film stuntman's life is neither safe nor easy. Elite's *Fall Guy*, the officially licenced version of the Warner Brothers TV series of the same name, could actually be regarded as a truer reflection of stunting than the series on which it is based! You play Lee Majors playing

Burbank) where you left off. The action opens with the famous 'jumping from a bridge onto a fast moving train' scene, which Colt Seavers can do with both arms tied behind his back and his eyes closed. Usually, when this is done, the train is exiting the tunnel/bridge when you jump onto it. What makes life tricky in *Fall Guy* is that the action is reversed, so as soon as you have successfully landed on the roof of a carriage, you must start to run like hell to keep from being smashed into the bridge. To make life more difficult there is a bird flapping around by the bridge, which gets in the way of the leaps. Once 15 carriages have been successfully leapt, the scene dissolves to the next. A sort of repeat except that the goods train carriages

technique for jumping/timing is required. Graphics are all large, cheerful in colour and detailed. All the moving graphics do so in a smooth, flicker-free action, and not at any slow pace either. Great tunes. *Fall Guy* seems to have plenty of playability in it, but I thought just jumping, timing and jumping again isn't very compulsive content for me. More likely to be a success with younger games players.'

● 'Elite have certainly worked very hard with the graphics in *Fall Guy*, because there are 30 screens, all varied, all animated with large, detailed pictures. Your man is a massive leaper too. A sophisticated degree of jumping control is possible, as the longer you keep the key



much to afford the royalties for the licence?'

● 'I never thought very much of the TV series, because I can't stand Lee Majors, which puts you at a disadvantage in reviewing a game based on the series. However, your man looks nothing like him, thank goodness, so that got that out of the way! There's not much to the game content, but what there is, is clever stuff, and difficult. Marvellous, detailed and often humorous graphics make for high playability, and I enjoyed the game very much. However I don't think it has that much lasting appeal because of the lack of content. It's true that you have to be able to change pace and jumping style from screen to screen, and there are a lot of them, but in the end the fun palls with the repetition of ideas. Good but not great, and a trifle expensive too.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z or M/X or SYM SHIFT left/right, Ø or 1 = jump

Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type

Keyboard play: responsive, simple operation and well laid out for left or right hands

Use of colour: excellent, very varied

Graphics: excellent, large, smooth and detailed

Sound: very good tunes with on/off facility

Skill levels: 1

Lives: 5

Screens: 30

General rating: a game with good playability, but lacking in addictivity.

Use of computer 75%

Graphics 80%

Playability 81%

Getting started 75%

Addictive qualities 72%

Value for money 74%

Overall 76%



They're much easier to catch at the station...

Colt Seavers in a series of stunt situations. The scenario is simple enough. The film has a limited budget, and every second wasted means more money lost. You get five lives, or 'takes' to put it in film parlance, and on each screen you must complete a set amount of shot 'footage'. As all the scenes incorporate the act of jumping from one thing to another, this means that enough footage is 'in the can' when you have leapt 15 times. Should you fail, and have to go for another 'take', you pick up 'footage-wise' (as they say in

are going the other way, so you must run towards the jumping position to stay on screen. Further scenes include leaping onto moving boats, tanks etc.

CRITICISM

● 'You may wonder, well is it anything like the TV series—the answer is yes, in a way. The idea couldn't have been simpler, just jump and land in the right places while avoiding flying objects (I think they're ducks)! That may sound easy but on each screen a different

pressed, the further he jumps. In play, the game is very simple really. It is one of those that requires a rhythmic memory, since repeated timing is of the essence. This means that completing a screen can become quite easy, but moving onto the next is another matter, since all your rhythms are thrown out. Despite its simplicity, and because of the great graphics, I found *Fall Guy* fun to play and remarkably addictive. Pity it has to be £1 too much, and I wonder if all these licenced games are having to add so

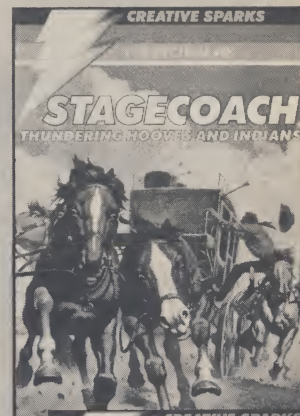
FAST ACTION FOR YOUR SPECTRUM

Can your computer
hold out?

STAGECOACH

A western action game for your Spectrum which really does provide something quite different and exciting.

You are Kidd Rivers, the hero of the game and you must leap aboard the runaway stage and guide it safely over the plains and through the treacherous mountains. Then just as you thought you were safe, fight off the attacking Indians.



BLACK HAWK

You're flying the world's deadliest aircraft, however it would appear that your Command Centre has just sent you on the world's deadliest mission.

The ultimate in strategic action. This 100% machine code game offers the player two full graphic scrolling screens with over 30 levels of play.



DELTA WING

Delta Wing is an advanced flight combat simulator. It has been designed to give an excellent 'feel' for the tumble and roll of high speed flight. With 15 separate controls to monitor and incoming enemy planes to be dealt with, this program takes you and your Spectrum to the limits.

Delta Wing also allows TWO Spectrum computers to play against each other through the use of two Interface 1's.

MACHINE AGAINST MACHINE



CREATIVE SPARKS

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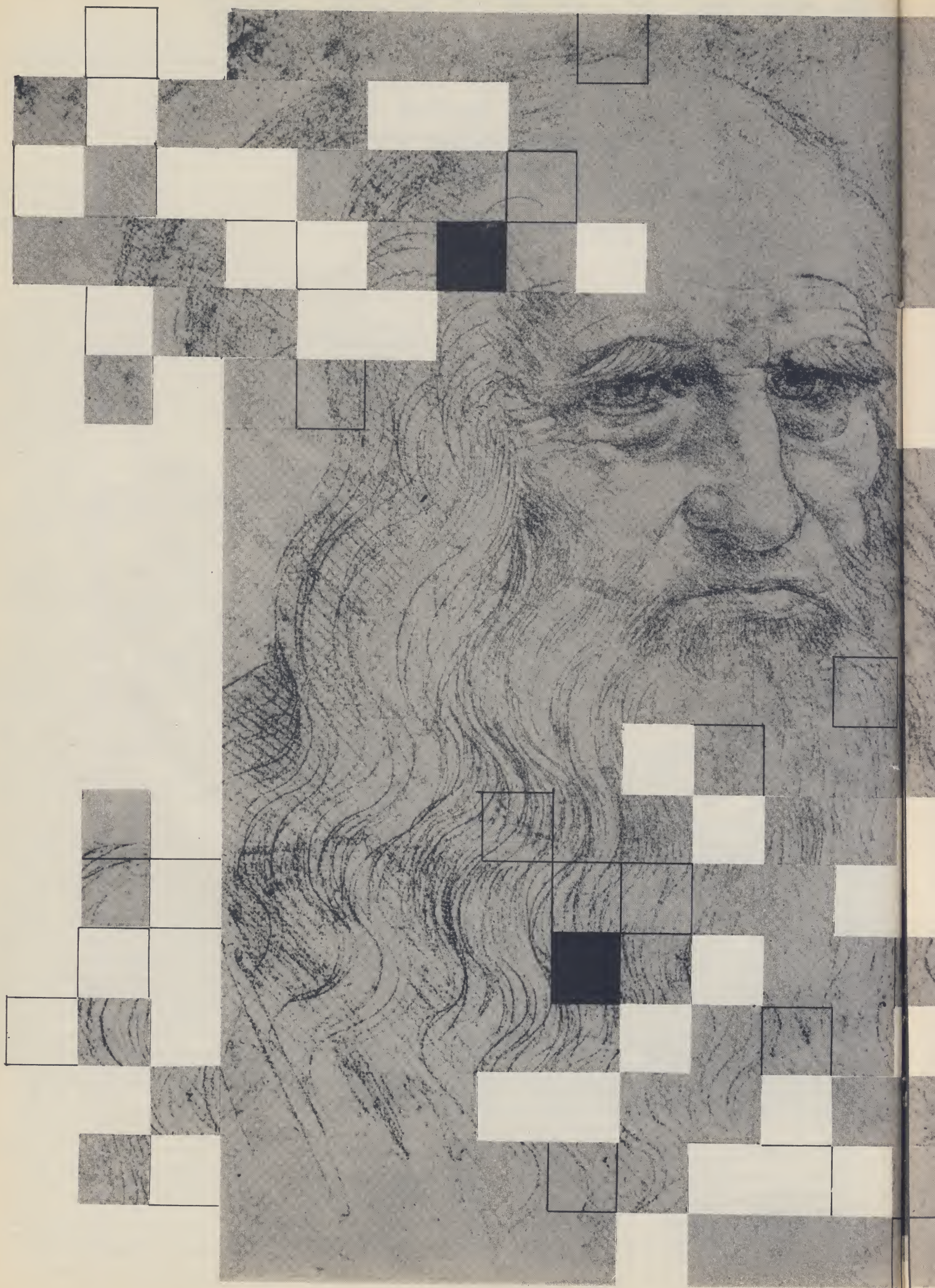
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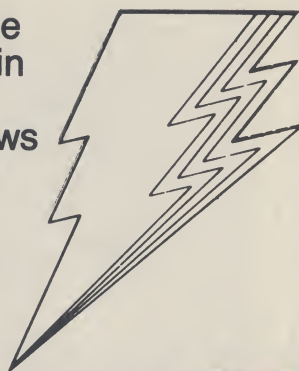
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CRASH and CREATIVE SPARKS have teamed up to offer you the chance to win more than £700 worth of graphic drawing equipment. And the good news is that there are no restrictive rules and regulations to tie you down, so just let that artistry flow!



Leonardo

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!!



PRIZES AND CATEGORIES

For the overall winner there is a professional **Devilbiss Airbrush** complete with low noise compressor, hoses and inks (worth over £330), plus a **Datapen** light pen.

The winner of **Category One** receives a **Rotring Isographic Drawing Pen Set** (worth £57), and an **A2 size drawing board** with stand, and a **Datapen** light pen.

For the winner of **Category Two** there is a **Touchmaster drawing pad** (worth £130). There are also five runners-up prizes of the new **Letrajat Graphic Tool**, each worth £25.

Well, what are you waiting for? Oh yes, the details!

COMPETITION

For the overall winner's prize, entrants must display the most innovative and imaginative use of the new graphic drawing utility from **CREATIVE SPARKS - Leonardo**. What you submit is entirely up to you, just so long as you don't forget to make use of **Leonardo** of course.

In **Category One** the prize will go to the person who in our view submits the **Best Technical Drawing** - exactly what you do a technical drawing of is, once again, up to you.

The **Category Two** prize will go to the artist of **The Best Poster Drawing**, and once more, subject and treatment is up to you.

You can enter any on or all three categories: that's **Leonardo** or **Best Technical Drawing** or **Best Poster Drawing**. Don't forget to write the appropriate category title on your submission(s), as well as your name and address, and send them to

**LEONARDO COMPETITION,
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10,
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

Please make sure your entries are suitably wrapped or packaged to avoid damage, and if you would like them returned, please state so and enclose a suitably stamped and addressed return envelope.

DEADLINE

As this competition is a rather more demanding one than most we run (!), it has an appropriately longer time to run. Please ensure that entries arrive no later than first post **March 31 1985**

We hope winning entries will be published in **CRASH** (lavishly!) although at the time of going to print, this has not yet been confirmed. Watch out for further details next year. . .

NEW CYLON ATTACK

Producer: A & F Software
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £5.75
Language: machine code

A & F are probably most famous in Spectrum games for their hi-scorer platform game *Chuckie Egg*, which still sits in the CRASH chart even now. It's been quite a while since that came out and the latest release, *New Cylon Attack* is a conversion from the BBC and Electron micros. The game was said to have set new standards for space games on the Beeb, and one critic went as far as to say that the only problem with it was that there was nothing to criticise (thereby reinforcing the fallacy that criticism implies bad comments). *New Cylon Attack* is a 3D space battle in which you must defend civilisation from the attacking Cylon ships. The aliens have discovered the route of your mother ship and are out to destroy it. As an interceptor pilot you are launched from the mother ship to fight them with your laser guns.

The screen display is largely filled with the 3D view of space. Centred in the view is a squared gun sight with vertical and lateral moving bars for fine sighting. The sights move with ship movement. Laser bolts are seen as round blobs hurtling out from either side of the screen towards the large and solid aliens.

Other screen information shown indicates status of shields, lasers and fuel. The lasers use energy and take time to recharge, failing to fire until replenished. Fuel and shields are replenished by docking with the yellow coloured mothership — an automatic process if you line the sights on it. Although fuel may be replenished by docking during an attack wave, shields are only replenished when a wave is defeated. But during the docking aliens may attack the mother ship.

Apart from the multifarious alien craft there are other celestial bodies about, planets with moons, signposts pointing to Mars, comets and many stars. A radar above the viewscreen indicates the pos-

itions of attacking aliens which are just out of visual range, while the mother ship is a yellow flashing dot. Well they thought it was great on the Beeb — how about the Spectrum?

CRITICISM

● 'A & F's *New Cylon Attack* is a 3D cockpit game using graphics which are more solid than the type used by some similar and recent games. The game is very playable but it only involves shooting Cylons — unlike other recent 3D space games like *Dark Star* and *Starstrike*, which have more things to do. But *Cylon Attack* is not exactly like them in the truest sense — it's basically a cockpit shoot em up, and it's a good one at that.'

● 'It's nice to be able to get away from the 3D wireframe that so many recent games have been specialising on and have solids for a change. I must say, I still prefer solid graphics, and these are nice big and detailed graphics that work well in perspective. This is not just a space shoot em game with your task to eliminate every alien in sight — this game contains more things such as rotating planets with rotating moons circling them, meteorites and asteroids as well as other various classes of space ships which cannot be shot — one of the most recognisable being the *USS Enterprise*! I am pleased to see A & F keeping on the Spectrum scene as they don't seem to have produced anything for the last six months. Good sound on this game is also a welcome feature. I found the game very playable, but maybe a little wearing on the addictive qualities.'

● 'There's something a bit old fashioned about *New Cylon Attack*, not surprising perhaps, as this is an older game from

another machine converted to the Spectrum. Not that the old fashioned quality is a drawback, because the graphics and speed are very much up to date, and what you get is a good, zappy shoot em up in the *Timegate* tradition. Good sound effects add to the atmosphere as well as dashes of visual humour in some of the debris occupying space with you. I did find that the game had a limited appeal after a while, which affects its addictiveness a little, but definitely one for the shoot em up brigade.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, needs four directional and one for fire

Joystick: Kempston catered for, others via UDK

Keyboard play: responsive — watch out for 'inertia' effect

Use of colour: playing area is black and white, simple usage around

Graphics: good, fast moving, large and work well in perspective

Sound: very good

Skill levels: 1

Lives: 3 fuel lives and percentage of shield damage

Screens: many attack waves

Special features:

General rating: good.

Use of computer 80%

Graphics 79%

Playability 77%

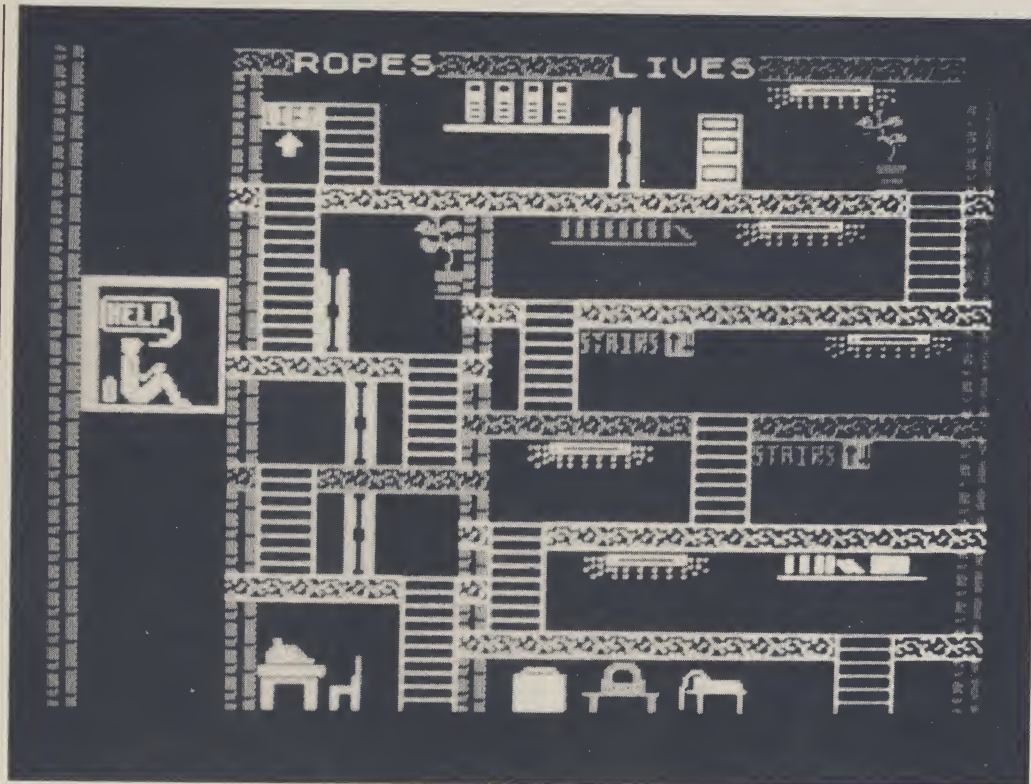
Getting started 78%

Addictive qualities 73%

Value for money 78%

Overall 78%





PLUMMET!

Producer: **Interceptor Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.00**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Curtis**

Maiden voyages of almost anything seem to attract drama. There was the sinking of the Titanic, Paul Newman's beautiful glass tower burned down in *Towering Inferno*, and now, during the opening of New York's newest skyscraper, the Mayor has got stuck between floors in the lift and the chain

holding the lift is slowly breaking. The hero of the piece is not Robert Redford but Orson who has been summoned to rescue the Mayor before death sets in. Orson must get enough ropes from the building to tie the lift to the steel beams to prevent its plummet. The skyscraper is seen as three screens (this isn't exactly a TOWERING inferno) or floors, and you can move between them by using the many relevant staircases, whilst avoiding being crushed by concrete blocks, grabbed by a zombie doorman or mutant revolving door or falling dust (they did say this was a NEW skyscraper?) and collecting the ropes necessary for the task. Fire doors on the second screen are shut and can't be opened unless you fire at them.

CRITICISM

● 'Plummet!' is an above average game with good graphics. The game is playable but a task reduced only to getting ropes does not help the addictive qualities very much. Perhaps the imagination should have been used more in game creation than on variants of well tread themes. Fair enough, the game has not been brought out before but it seemed to have those properties of so many other games which make it feel familiar. For example, after seeing a few episo-

des of American TV series (no names!), the plots wear a little thin, an although this is an above average game, it is made up from the same old material. A little more imagination and originality please!

● 'Plummet! is on the whole one of the most infuriating games I have played. Once you get to the top screen, shoot the doormen and dodge the falling dust and put a rop in the lift, your fire button stops working. I thought the graphics were very good but the sound, wht there was of it, wasn't. I generally enjoyed playing it, even though it is infuriating.'

● 'Interceptor are probably better known for their CBM64 games where the graphics are great bu the game content is often lcking. This seems to be the case with Plummet!. Graphically, the three screens are very good, the player and the Zombie Doormen are well animated an even the sound is good; bu the game's challenge will be gone within a week even for people who find 'Breakout' games mystifying. Especially when priced this high, good graphics are not enough. We Spectrum owners are not averse to games being complex and mean, so a three-screen cousin of *Manic Miner* is hardly likely to set the Hotline Chart ablaze.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, AGF, Sinclair 2

Keyboard play: sensible positions and responsive

Use of colour: good

Graphics: smooth, with some nice animation, generally simple looking

Sound: poor

Skill levels: 1

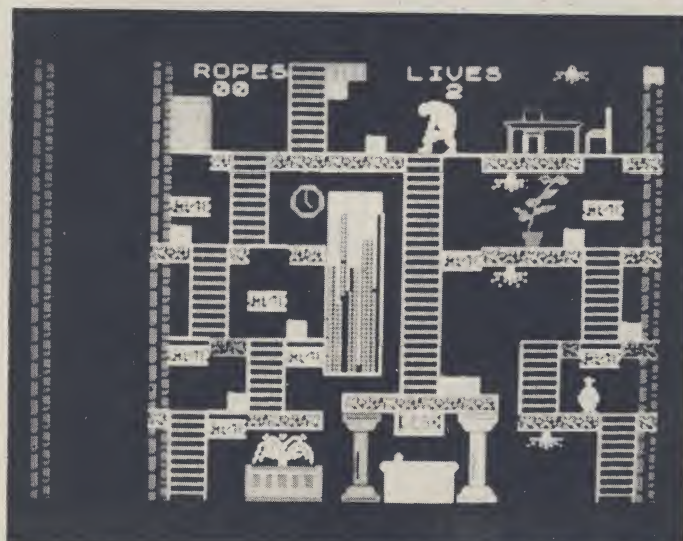
Lives: 3

Screens: 3

Special features:

General rating: lacks addictivity and scope, only average at a steep price.

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	68%
Playability	70%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	49%
Value for money	45%
Overall	61%



ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME

PRESENTS

JETMAN



GOOD GRIEF! HERE I AM, HEADING FOR A TERRIBLE DISASTER, BUT BEFORE THE COMPUTER COULD TELL ME WHAT IT WAS, THE MONSTER ATE IT....

HUNGRY!

NEEDS SALT!

GROME

BUT I FEAR NOT, FOR THIS MONSTER LIKES ME, AND WITH THIS MONSTER AT MY SIDE I WILL GO ANYWHERE IN MY SEARCH FOR THE EYE OF OKTUP!

..EXCEPT A BLACK HOLE, OF COURSE!

HEH!

WHAT WAS THAT JUST WENT "THWIP"?

WAS THAT YOU JUST WENT "THWIP"?

WELL SOMETHING AROUND HERE JUST WENT "THWIP"!

GOOD GRIEF! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! WE HAVE PASSED THROUGH A BLACK HOLE, AND WE COULD BE LOST FOREVER!!

BWR!

EH?

VERDANT

SHNAP

ONE MOMENT WE WERE SAFE IN OUR OWN SPACE AND TIME....

...THEN...THWIP!

THWIP?

FREWER?

WAH-HAAAAAAA

LITTLE DOES OUR HERO KNOW...

...THE MONSTER IS NOW SITTING ON THE TRANSMIT BUTTON!

THE MONSTERS CRY ECHOES THROUGH DEEP SPACE...

...UNTIL...

YERTH?

QASP!

CHOKES!

THE DOOR

THE DOOR!

SHUT THE DOOR!

CHOKES!

GAG

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, LITTLE ALIEN PEDON! I AM A BIG-TIME AMBASSADOR FROM EARTH, SENT TO FIND THE EYE OF OKTUP!

CHOOOKE!

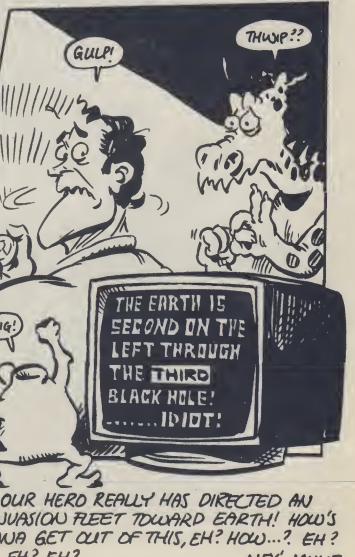
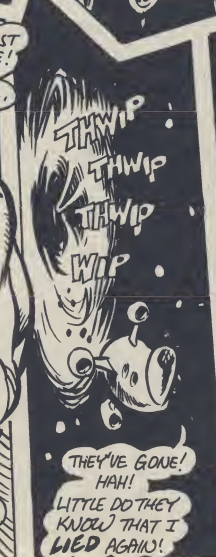
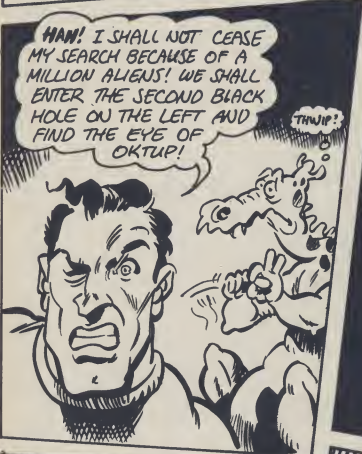
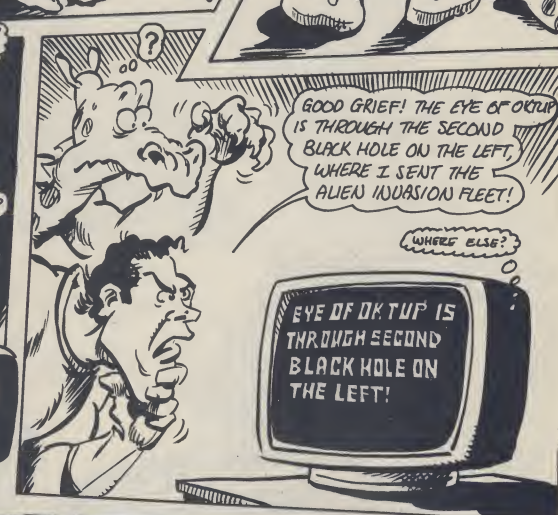
GAG

WELL, AIN'T THAT THOMETHIN'?

MAYBE WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER OUT?

YOU THEE...

WATH YOU THOUTING FOR MUWAH?

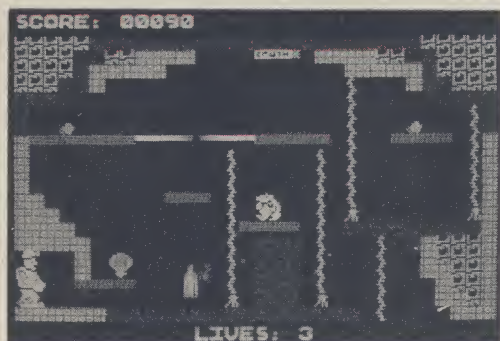




IT SEEMS SUITABLE to announce the results of the CRASH READERS' AWARDS 1984 in this issue of CRASH because it marks the end of our first year of existence. Unlike most other computer magazines CRASH started life as a mail order catalogue which reviewed games as a part of its service, leaving customers to make up their own minds about actually buying. Because of this earlier background, some of that philosophy carried over into the magazine. The idea was to act as a service not only to readers, but also to the software industry – a means of bringing both sides together. All too often, people 'suppose' what others want and magazines go along with it regardless. Only time will tell whether or not CRASH has had any significant effect on either software producers or software buyers, but it seems logical to let readers say their piece on what software and hardware they have liked best during the past year. These are the results of the 1984 CRASH READERS' AWARDS.

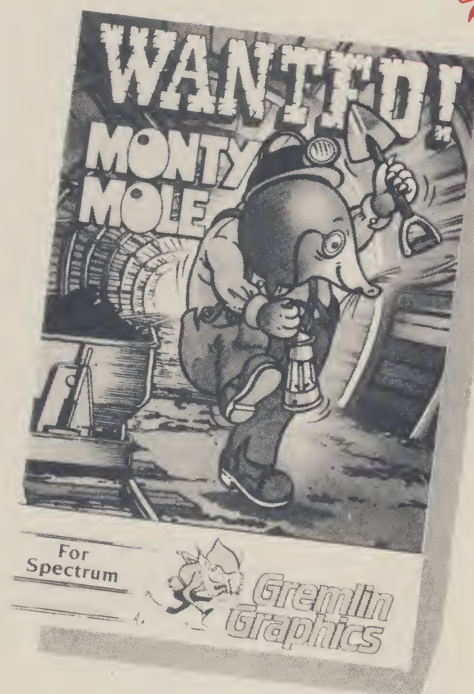
BEST PLATFORM GAME

MONTY MOLE by GREMLIN GRAPHICS



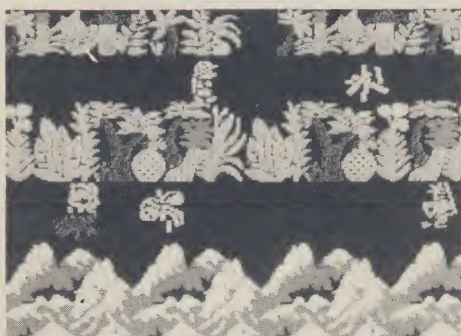
One argument about the 'Oscars' is that it is the films towards the end of the 'Oscar' year that tend to win the awards, with the earlier ones tending to be forgotten. That's as may be, but Gremlin's *Monty Mole* won by a comfortable margin over *Jet Set Willy*, taking 40% of the total vote. Third in line was *Frank N. Stein* from P. S. S.

Written by Peter Harrap, *Monty Mole* sprang to fame via the TV news, with its timely caricature of Miners' leader Arthur Scargill, but it was the complexity of playing the platform style game that gave it appeal, along with its lively graphics. One reviewer said, 'The graphics, design and animation off all the moving characters is excellent, amusing and attractive, and that adds quite a bit to the playability of the game.'



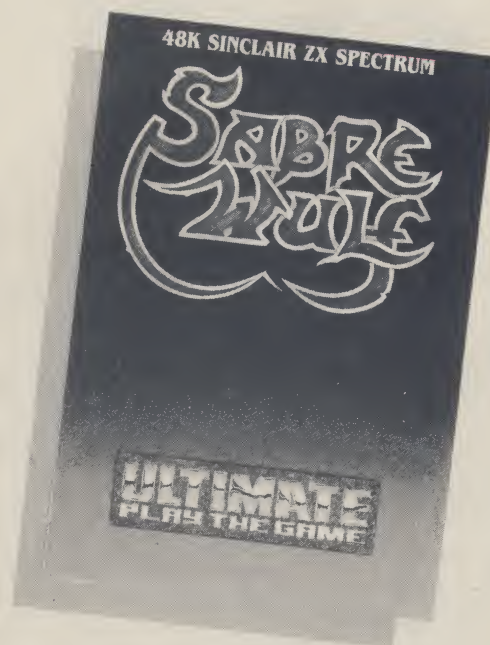
BEST MAZE GAME

SABRE WULF by ULTIMATE



There could be hardly any doubt as to the outcome in this category and Ultimate's *Sabre Wulf* won hands down, getting 49% of the vote, with the next being *Cavelon* from Ocean with 11% and then *Antics* from Bug-Byte.

Despite arguments about Ultimate's steep price increase and whether *Sabre Wulf* was merely an *Atic Atac* with leaves on, the game has caused more praising mail than any other game we can think of this year. The graphics were excellent, and the game a tough one to play, though perhaps not quite as hard as *Atic Atac*. The sort of excitement that a new Ultimate game can produce is summed up neatly by one reviewer who said, 'After waiting a week in a state of extreme anxiety for the phone call to say IT'S HERE! I almost fainted when it came!' The same reviewer has recently been in a state suitable for hospitalisation with the wait for *Underwulde* and *Knight Lore*!





BEST SHOOT EM UP

AD ASTRA

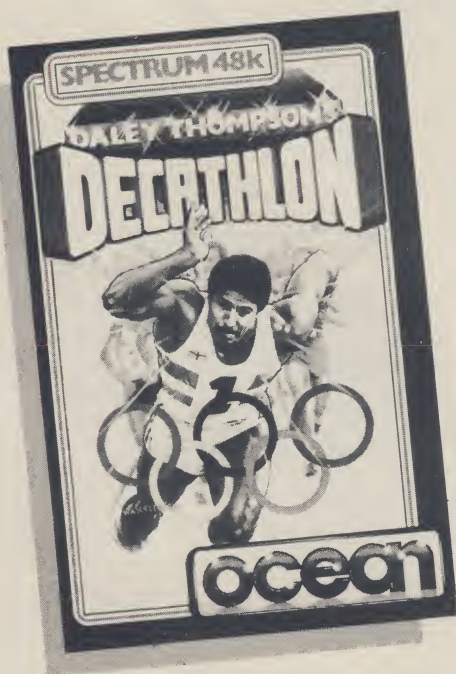
by GARGOYLE GAMES



The extraordinary solid 3D graphics of *Ad Astra* launched Gargoyle Games, and CRASH was proud to be the first to spot it in the May issue, when we said things like, 'The stunning graphics are the first thing to hit you in the eye...'

'With its superb graphics, speed and mass of alien weaponry, *Ad Astra* is a difficult and addictive game to play.'

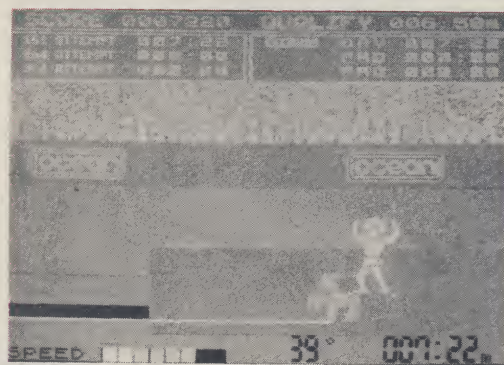
It was a comfortable win over Micromega's *Code Name Matand Black Hawk* from Creative Sparks. We have to admit to some puzzlement that Micromega's *Death Chase* didn't crop up near the top of this category, but Gargoyle's win is well deserved, and the Birmingham-based software house is set to give us more surprises in 1985 with their unique graphics.



BEST (OVERALL) ARCADE GAME

DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON

by OCEAN



This was a pretty tight fought category, as you might imagine. *Decathlon* took it with 17% of the total vote, closely followed by *Jet Set Willy* with 15% of the total vote and *Sabre Wulf* with 12%.

Being the year of the Olympics, 1984 saw a spate of 'Track and Field' type games appearing in the early summer – some are still appearing even now, but clearly Ocean's glamorous tie up with British star decathlete Daley Thompson, was set for the top. At CRASH we had a good chance to play the game as it was used to test the joysticks for the 'Battlefield' article. The reviewers liked it, even after seeing the CBM64 version, with the only gripe being that Daley looked as though he had been washed in Bold!

NO.1 SWORDS & SORCERY

**NEW
RELEASE
AVAILABLE
20th OCT**



WIZARDS power level 1 - 10



DRAGON power level 7 - 9



LYTCH power level 6 - 10



WEREWOLF power level 4
a selection of your opponents

SWORDS & SORCERY

Swords and Sorcery represents the first example of the ultimate in graphic adventures using the unique MIDAS system.

Swords and Sorcery differs from other adventures in that you guide your character through the unending corridors of the underworld on a quest for material, physical and/or spiritual power. The choice is yours.

You begin as a novice with limited abilities in the use of magic, sword play and stealth (lock picking, thieving etc).

As you wander the corridors, you will encounter beings meek and mighty, discover untold wealth and worthless trash. Some objects will increase your powers, whilst some will be dangerous and still others will be protected from pilferers (you!) by friendly ingenious traps, all designed to help or hinder you on your pilgrimage to power and glory.

There are quests within quests within Swords and Sorcery, for those who want to follow them. Some are given others

must be found, and some are lost causes. There are many ways of opening the gate between the levels of the dungeons. Some are obscure and easy, others obvious and dangerous. The most profitable paths are both. The Ultimate goal of many will be to find the lost armour of Zob, which was un-made by its maker, and its parts scattered across the levels. What, where, how, who and why are answers to be found. All that is known is the prayer of the seekers:

WHEN DARK CABALLUS HIS COUNCILS LEND US
LET NOT THE RED CLUPEA HARANGUE US
TURN US FROM WHAT SEEMS TREMENDOUS AND
THUS TO ZOBS GREAT TREASURE SEND US.

You need never tire of Swords and Sorcery — when this dungeon can no longer hold you, the next awaits. . . there are a series of expansion modules planned to extend your enjoyment indefinitely.

**Available on Cassette £9-95
SPECTRUM 48K OR COMMODORE 64**

(Multi Dimensional Animation System)

MIDAS ADVENTURE CONCEPT

Stunning 3D graphic animation simulating video disk games.

A unique fully interactive adventure language using the latest ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE techniques.

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Real time Interactive Conflict Sequences. Talk to your opponent, attack them, flee them and even confuse them.

Joystick capability for movement, combat and actions through unique menu feature. Keyboard operation for more complex interaction with the adventure when time permits.

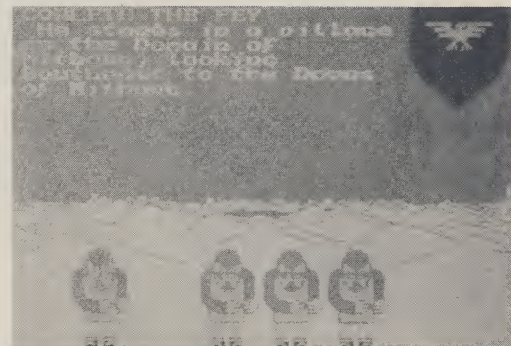
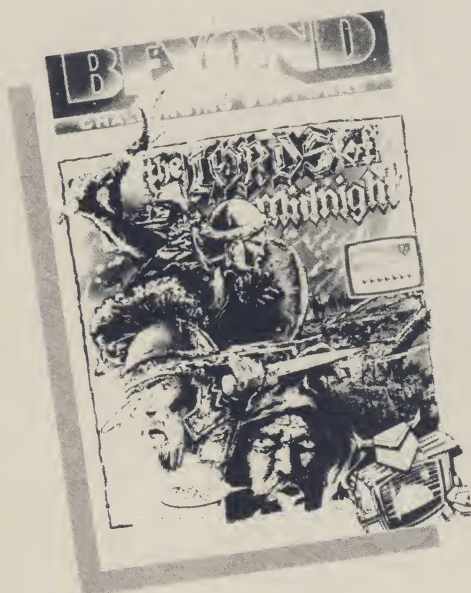
Develop your own unique player characters. For example — specialize in magic, swordplay etc.

Total expandability — your own characters can be transferred to future adventures and new opponents, scenarios and objects can be added to all the games. A series of expansion modules to increase indefinitely the playing life of each game written with MIDAS.



BEST TEXT/GRAPHICAL ADVENTURE

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT by BEYOND SOFTWARE

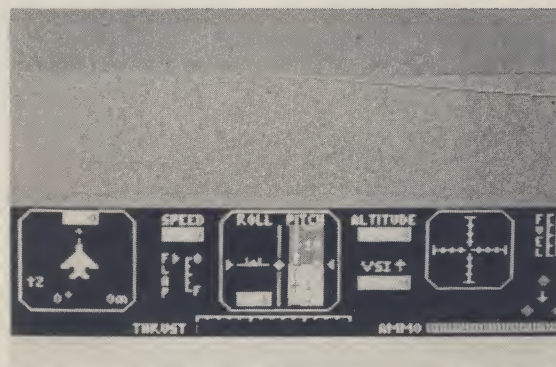
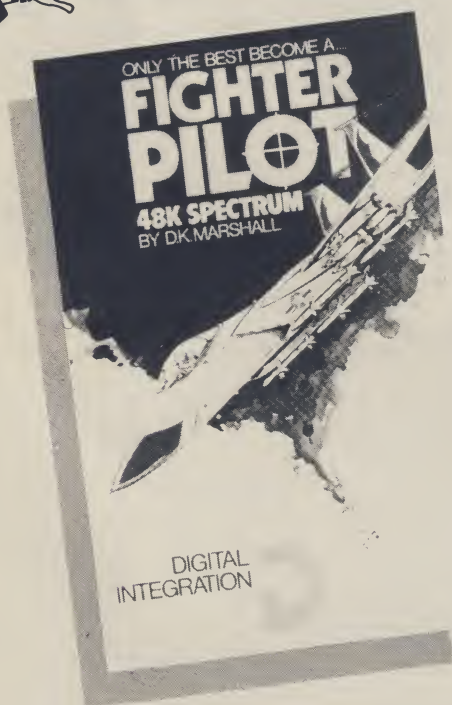


One of the most firm wins in any category goes to Beyond's *Lords of Midnight*, which received 51% of the vote, way ahead of *Sherlock* from Melbourne House with 10% and Adventure International's *The Hulk*. Perhaps the surprising point is that *Lords of Midnight* is more of a strategy war-game than an adventure, but clearly, the way it has combined all the various elements within its framework has impressed enormously, and no one could possibly argue that it isn't loaded with graphics of a very high standard indeed. Derek Brewster kicked off his review with the words, 'Beyond have produced a game of immense complexity that transcends the simple word-matching of the mainstream adventure and in many respects more resembles a strategy wargame'.



BEST SIMULATION

FIGHTER PILOT by DIGITAL INTEGRATION



Few would deny Digital Integration's right to take this category with their superb program *Fighter Pilot*, which has remained consistently in the CRASH Hotline chart for some time – a proof of its high popularity. It wins comfortably with a high 35% of the vote from Psion's *Match Point* which received 18% and Micromega's *Full Throttle* with 14%. Written by Digital's co-owner Dave Marshall, himself a fighter pilot, this sophisticated program was the main attention grabber at the ZX Microfair where it was first launched in February. Much was due to the fact that before *Fighter Pilot* flight simulations always seemed a bit slow, this was the first to offer arcade gamers something to get their teeth into.

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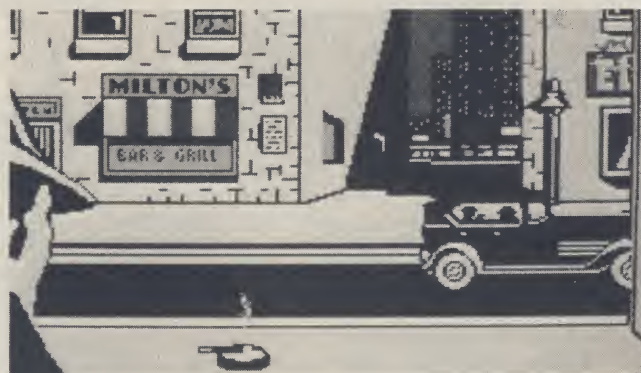
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BEST STRATEGY/SIMULATION

MUGSY

by MELBOURNE HOUSE



A rather peculiar category this one – hard to describe accurately, but everyone seems to have got the idea. Outright winner with 18% of the total vote is Melbourne House with their superbly graphic *Mugsy*, another popular CRASH charter. Not too far behind was Incentive with their look at the software business called *Millionaire*, and just behind that comes the ubiquitous Beyond with *Lords of Midnight*. It would be fair to add that *Football Manager* received a very high vote, but as the program dates from 83 it isn't eligible.

Mugsy scores so heavily with its tremendous comic style graphics, suited to a game set in the roaring twenties when hoods were really hoods, and people were assets to be squeezed.



BEST WARGAME

STONKERS

by IMAGINE



There was a fair selection of wargames voted for which means that the percentages gained by the top three are fairly low. Imagine's colourful *Stonkers* came out ahead with 25% of the overall vote, very closely followed by *Lords of Midnight*. Further back was Red Shift's elegant *Rebel Star Raiders*. CRASH was only medium impressed by *Stonkers*, but admitted that the game was different to any wargame before it, one reviewer saying, 'The game appealed to me much more than most of the other wargames due to its higher quality of graphics, large scale and simple controls.' The bug which causes the program to crash was noted, but to our knowledge Imagine never corrected it before they crashed themselves.